



FINANCIAL TIMES

EUROPE'S BUSINESS NEWSPAPER

Weekend June 4/June 5 1988

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WORLD NEWS

Boeings in near miss at Biggin Hill

Two airliners, packed with passengers, were involved in a near miss near London. A British Airways Boeing 737 flight and a Dutch Transavia Boeing 737 were half a mile apart and separated by only 700 ft vertically over Biggin Hill, the Civil Aviation Authority confirmed. They should have been at least three miles apart and separated by 1,000 ft. The CAA said the incident was being investigated.

Relief workers airlift

A United Nations airlift evacuated 25 relief workers, including 20 Britons, trapped by rebel forces in northern Somalia. A Foreign Office spokesman said a further five Britons and 75 other workers were due to be evacuated shortly.

S Africa bomb kills 4

Four people died and another 19 were injured after a limpet mine, hidden in a flower box, exploded outside a bank in Roodepoort, near Johannesburg. Page 3

Paisley faces jail term

Ulster Democratic Unionist leader, the Rev Ian Paisley, says he is prepared to spend 30 days in jail rather than pay a £200 fine imposed for taking part in illegal parades. Page 5

Arrest warrant for MP

A warrant was issued at Telford for the arrest of Labour MP Ron Brown, alleging criminal damage to the House of Commons mace.

Car safety tests

The Consumers' Association is to test the Japanese-made Suzuki SJ 413 after US reports that 16 people died in rollover accidents in the vehicle.

English soccer they fear

European police chiefs met at Teddington, Surrey, to discuss ways of preventing an "invasion" by English soccer hooligans at the European Championship in West Germany next week.

Action on terrorists

European Community ministers are to toughen joint action against international terrorism, including IRA attacks in continental Europe. Page 2

Red Army Faction threat

The Red Army Faction, the West German guerrilla group, threatened a new phase of violence in its underground newspaper, Bonn security sources said.

Barbie appeal rejected

An appeal by Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie against a life sentence for crimes against humanity was rejected by a Paris court.

Schlüter forms coalition

Danish Prime Minister Poul Schlüter formed a three-party coalition. Page 2

Soviet Union golf course

The first golf course to be built in the Soviet Union should be in operation by 1991.

French Open

Mats Wilander of Sweden will meet Henri Leconte in the finals of the French Open Championship. Weekend FT, Page XX; Tennis-mad France, Page 2

MARKETS

DOLLAR

New York lunchtime: DM 1.7283; FFR 5.839; SF 1.405; Y126.08; London: DM 1.727 (1.726); FFR 5.8325 (5.833); SF 1.405; Y126.9 (126.5); Dollar index 93.9 (94.2); Tokyo close: Y126.11

US LUNCHTIME RATES

Fed Funds 7.5%; 3-month Treasury Bills: yield 6.67%; Long Bond: 10% yield 8.12%

GOLD

New York: Comex August \$473; London: \$464.75 (462.75)

Cable price changes yesterday: Back Page

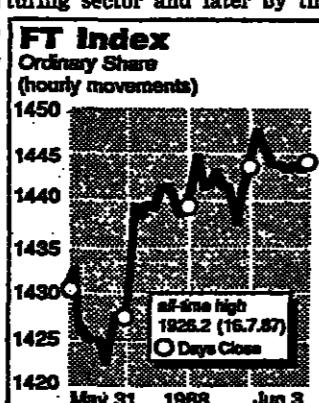
BUSINESS SUMMARY

Falling £ fuels interest rate speculation

STERLING lost more ground against the D-Mark and the dollar yesterday, ending the week 2½ per cent down against the currencies of Britain's main trading partners.

It fell half a cent to \$1.785 and five pence to DM3.1, raising speculation about another rate rise if the fall continues. Back Page

LONDON SHARE trading this week was brightened by takeover speculation in the food manufacturing sector and later by the



IT proved to be the final, special moment in what a weary, home-bound President Ronald Reagan was yesterday moved to describe as "a week of special moments," writes Michael Cason.

After six days of Kremlin summits, Red Square walkabouts, Buckingham Palace teas and Downing Street dinners, the 77-year-old leader of the free world found himself near the end of his exhausting mission and speaking in London's 18th century Guildhall. He drew comfort, he said, from the survival of something so much older than himself.

The theme has been set well before the President's arrival, with gathering dignitaries summoned to the times of True Love and Mind If I Make Love to You? As a concession to the City contingent, the band threw in Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?

The Guildhall had put on its best bib and tucker to welcome "Grandfather Reagan," as Mr Mikhail Gorbachev had admittedly, but pointedly, introduced him to a young Muscovite. The relaxed, garden party atmosphere extended to white gloves and huge hats for the ladies - Mrs Nancy Reagan and Mrs Margaret Thatcher sat alongside each other and threatened to touch horns.

The stage slowly filled with famous political faces, both contemporary and historic. Mr Howard Baker, the White House Chief of Staff, sat close to Lord

Wilson of Rievaulx, who sat next to Lord Callaghan. Mr George Shultz, the US Secretary of State, again found himself in the presence of political dissidents, notably Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Nigel Lawson.

The President's first public speech since leaving Moscow was as much a reinforcement of his unequalled admiration for Mrs Thatcher as an appraisal of Mr Gorbachev.

The endorsement of their enduring "special relationship" was not, however, going to be a one-way street. The historic Guildhall was bathed in television and lights and in manic, effusive, affection as the former radio announcer from Tampico, Illinois, and the research chem-

ist from Grantham, Lincolnshire, each paid praise on the other's subsequent success.

At this hour in history, the President said, the entire world saluted Mrs Thatcher and the British people. Her leadership and vision had been an inspiration to everyone who loved freedom and yearned for peace.

Having evoked memories of Arnhem and the Normandy beaches, together with the spirit of Sir Winston Churchill and the words of Tennyson, the President took his seat alongside his wife and listened, perhaps for the first time this week, to some one with whom he could easily identify.

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As the presidential motorcade swept away from Guildhall, past a small crowd protesting over US involvement in Nicaragua, a bowler-hatted bystander in a smock coat urged the Reagans to prepare to meet their maker. The more thought of meeting anyone else before getting home appeared to push the President even further back in his seat.

WEEKEND FT



Leaders of the free world find love and peace

BY STEWART FLEMING

Reagan optimistic of lasting Soviet change

BY STEWART FLEMING

PRESIDENT Ronald Reagan yesterday held out the hope that the world was "entering a new era in history, a time of lasting change in the Soviet Union."

Speaking in London during the break in his journey back to Washington from his historic summit meeting in Moscow with Mr Mikhail Gorbachev, Mr Reagan offered his most optimistic assessment yet of the changes the Soviet leader is trying to implement.

There were "momentous" developments. "In all aspects of Soviet life the talk is of progress towards democratic reform," Mr Reagan said. He cited Mr Gorbachev's plans for restructuring the Soviet economy, political institutions and religious, social and artistic life.

Mr Gorbachev's proposals on "such things as official accountability, limitations on length of service in office, an independent judiciary [and] revisions of criminal law," all of which he had discussed with the Soviet leader, Mr Reagan said: "To those of us who are familiar with the post-war era, all of this

is a cause for shaking the head in wonder."

He made it clear, too, that the US now accepted the assessment of the other major Western allies.

"My personal impression of Mr Gorbachev is that he is a serious man seeking serious reform," he said.

Mr Reagan's comments, like his decision to stop in London to deliver his first formal assessment of the summit and to meet Mr Noboru Takeshita, the Japanese Prime Minister, seemed designed in part to promote unity in a Western alliance facing difficult decisions in its dealings with Moscow, particularly on arms control and the sharing of the alliance's military and economic burdens.

By once again avoiding comments which could be regarded as harshly critical of Moscow, the President also seemed intent on confirming his own "peace offensive." The aim appears to be to try to counter Mr Gorbachev's popularity in Western Europe and to demonstrate that the US - and not just Moscow - is committed to the improvement in

East-West relations which began in earnest two-and-a-half years ago when the superpower leaders first met in Geneva.

This approach also helps to set the stage for Vice-President George Bush, the likely Republican candidate for the presidency, as he prepares for November's election.

Mr Bush, who presents himself as a man committed to continuing Mr Reagan's policies, is expected to try to capitalise on the politically popular easing of East-West tensions that Mr Reagan and Mr Gorbachev are pursuing.

Although it was billed as a report on the Moscow summit, Mr Reagan's speech at Guildhall in the City of London contained no new details of his discussions with the Soviet leader and only a cursory description of the substance of the talks.

He did, however, seek to remove concern among Washington

Continued on Back Page

Sakharov calls for release of dissidents, Page 2; Reagan new era, Page 4

Russia seeks to relax trade rules

BY QUENTIN PEEL IN MOSCOW

THE SOVIET UNION has drawn up a far-reaching agenda for integrating its economy into the international trading system.

It has in mind a new deal with the European Community, an application within two years to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the introduction of a convertible rouble by the end of the century.

The most comprehensive agreement in which one part would provide legally binding commitments covering trade and industrial co-operation, where a second would state the intention to co-operate in other areas, and in which a third would list problems subject to consultations, such as anti-dumping cases.

The new Soviet attitude to the EC marks a transformation from its traditional refusal to have any formal relations with Brussels.

However, EC member states may well prove cautious about rushing into arrangements that go further than their long-standing deals with other east European countries.

Soviet plans to apply for GATT membership are also likely to run into Western hostility, on the grounds that state-trading countries do not fit easily into the organisation's commitment to a free-trading system. The US has long been opposed to Soviet membership.

Mr Ivanov played down the possibility of application to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. He said there had been informal contact with both organisations, but each had been non-committal.

Mr Ivanov suggested that the ambition to move to a freely convertible rouble was not likely to be achieved before the end of the century, though he felt it could be introduced between Comecon countries sooner.

He disclosed that consortia from western Europe and Japan were considering similar deals to that of the recently formed American trade consortium, to provide an umbrella organisation for new joint ventures and more flexible access to foreign currency.

EC officials are expected to visit Moscow next week to initialise its entry into Comecon.

Mr Ivanov said he hoped it would then be possible to agree on a timetable for talks on bilateral relations.

He suggested a framework agreement in which one part would provide legally binding commitments covering trade and industrial co-operation, where a second would state the intention to co-operate in other areas, and in which a third would list problems subject to consultations, such as anti-dumping cases.

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Mr Ivanov said the Soviet Union had to accomplish its domestic price reform and customs tariff adjustments, before submitting a memorandum to GATT.

His timetable of just two years for that process would certainly be regarded as optimistic by many Soviet and foreign economists, who see domestic price reform, involving price increases for many staple foods and services, as the most politically sensitive part of Mr Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika plans.

Mr Ivanov said he believed negotiations with GATT could then be concluded within five years.

Continued on Back Page

RAIL REVOLUTION

Christophe Lorenz explains how legendary car designer Ettore Bugatti, suffering the fall-out from the 1929 Wall Street crash, turned to trains and sparked a revolution in rail travel in the UK

Page I

FINANCE

Nikki Tait on the Atlantic Assets reconstruction plan, plus the latest on Great Investment Race

Page IV

ANTIQUES

Antony Thorncroft previews the pick of the antique fairs - in colour

Page IX

DIVERSIONS

Up, up and away in a beautiful pink balloon

Page XVI

HOW TO SPEND IT

Get ahead...in a hat

Page XVII

SPORT

Youthful tennis talent in Paris, plus Mike Gatting - the man behind Middlesex

Page XIX

Bread today or jam tomorrow?

Income from £10,000 invested in Income Fund	Income from £10,000 invested in Building Society

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OVERSEAS NEWS

The championships are the place for companies to court clients and talk of prospects under the socialists, writes Paul Betts

"I WARNED Balladur two years ago that the right were committing political suicide by restoring majority voting," remarked one of France's leading businessmen as he watched André Agassi, the new golden boy of tennis, hammer the ball down the tramlines in the centre court of the Roland Garros stadium.

The right is getting its just deserts," he later mused in one of the corporate entertainment tents in the exclusive Roland Garros "village" tucking into a chocolate cake drowned in vanilla sauce. "I'm sure the climax will be much more exciting during the men's final here than in the polling booths on Sunday since the election results are a foregone conclusion."

"Unless there is a miracle, the socialists are bound to win a comfortable majority in the National Assembly," he added, expressing the disenchantment of many of his countrymen who have had to endure a succession of elections - first the President-

tial election and now a general election.

But at least they have been compensated during the last two weeks by the much more entertaining spectacle of the Paris open tennis championships, which have overshadowed the general election campaign in conversations and television.

The Roland Garros tournament has in its 60 years displaced the Tour de France cycle race as the country's most popular sporting event. It has also transformed tennis from a snob pastime of the Snecma state aero engine group to a seven-week pay protest at the stadium to try to muster a crowd of up to 10,000 spectators.

For the first time ever reached eccentric extremes in Paris. Most business seems to be conducted by executives in their hospitality suites or special boxes on the centre court at Roland Garros

television screens installed in many Metro station platforms. The two state-owned television channels, Antenne 2 and FR3, also transmit the matches all day, while the other channels inevitably lead their evening news programmes with the latest exploits from Roland Garros.

The politicians and the election campaign invariably follow, although some collisions, if they are lucky, have been spotted by the cameras sitting among the tennis fans, the cigar-smoking business men and the shapely socialites in the stands of the centre court.

But not surprisingly, there have been far fewer politicians than usual at Roland Garros this year. In contrast, the number of businessmen seems to be ever increasing. As many as 250 companies have sponsored the tournament this year and they all fight for the prestige of having a

tent in the famous village. The village is a series of about a dozen hospitality suites in one corner of the Roland Garros tennis precinct.

Lunch, tea and cocktails are served by Lacoste clad nymphs who also escort the business moguls and their guests to the boxes on the centre court or their seats on court number one. "You don't come to see the tennis but to be seen in the village," said a PR man from a big French company. "If you are not in the village, you are really nobody."

Other companies have hospitality suites in other corners of the stadium and pretend that it is much more chic not to be part of the village mob. The CIT-Alcatel telecommunications group goes even further by installing its hospitality suite in the exotic setting of a nearby Kew Garden-style greenhouse where Maxim's

weather has been lousy, but the executives of the big French companies, especially those with intimate links with the state, are always in a state of high nerves after a change of government.

Even though Mr Pierre Beregovoy, the socialist finance minister, has claimed on several occasions that there would be no corporate witch hunts this time, everybody expects heads to roll.

Who would go and who would stay was one of the hottest subjects of conversation at Roland Garros this year as the businessmen and their cronies watched a new generation of rising young tennis champions still in their teens and the back-in-form local hero, Henri Leconte, defeat the Lendl and Navratilovas of this world.

The tennis has been particularly exciting this year because of the new faces from Russia and America. By comparison, the businessmen noted, the faces of the politicians in the new French

party, "if you are not in the village, you are really nobody."

The companies regard the overall cost cheap considering the goodwill and publicity they generate with their clients. But the atmosphere in many of the hospitality suites and the corporate boxes was not as relaxed as usual this year.

It was not just because the government were all too familiar.

Sakharov calls for release of dissidents

By Quentin Peel in Moscow

DR ANDREI SAKHAROV, the Soviet Union's most prominent and distinguished dissident, yesterday appeared on a Soviet government platform to demand the release of all political prisoners.

In the latest dramatic manifestation of Mr Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*, the Nobel prize-winning nuclear physicist, aged 67, banished six years to exile in the city of Gorky until December 1986, demanded further sweeping reforms of the legal and penal systems to seal in place the whole process of reform.

At the same time he gave his blessing to the political and economic changes under way, describing Mr Gorbachev himself as "an outstanding statesman and one of the chief architects of *perestroika*".

He said: "Sizeable changes have taken place. They do not ensure full implementation of human rights but . . . the policy which is being pursued is serious, and it deserves trust. To a certain extent we should even give it an advance measure of trust."

"The question of trust in this country at this period would only promote *perestroika*. Confidence in this government would help promote human rights, too."

Dr Sakharov's wife, Mrs Yelena Bonner, furiously denied any suggestion that her husband had done a deal with the Soviet government in order to give a press conference in the foreign ministry's international press centre, in which only two days before Mr Gorbachev had given his close-of-summit address to a small invited audience.

Dr Sakharov himself, speaking throughout calmly and thoughtfully, very obviously clear about the message he wanted to give, said: "There were no conditions on what or how I was going to speak. Since such conditions had been placed, I would not have come to hold this press conference." He read out a list of 20 "prisoners of conscience", demanding that they be "immediately released from jails, labour camps, psychiatric hospitals and from their places of exile."

He strongly attacked many aspects of the legal system, calling for the repeal of key articles under which political prisoners were banished, and the urgent scrapping of the law which allows the penal authorities to prolong sentences arbitrarily.

He defended President Reagan's insistence on raising human rights to the top of his agenda at this week's summit with Mr Gorbachev, saying it was not pressure, but "natural concern" over the fundamental observance of human rights.

The Japanese regard it as a worrying sign that the Community's plans increased external trade protection in parallel with a freer internal market by 1992.

The Community, for its part, appears to regard the recent promises of import liberalisation by Tokyo as signs that its tougher policy towards Japan is paying off.

• The European Community's trade deficit with Japan last year rose by 13 per cent from \$26.5bn to \$24.2bn (\$12.4bn), the EC Commission said yesterday. Reuter reports from Brussels.

Until these prerequisites are honoured, there can be no talk of a human rights conference in Moscow."

On Mr Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms, he warned against the danger of a conservative backlash. "Perestroika is a very complicated process in the course of which mistakes can be made, and setbacks can be suffered. All this can be used for large sections of the population to be made disaffected."

"But it is also my hope that *perestroika* is an utterly necessary undertaking. It is necessary from an objective viewpoint, no matter the personal will of its supporters."

The press conference, attended throughout by foreign ministry officials, who provided interpretation and other facilities, was organised after dozens of foreign journalists requested interviews with Dr Sakharov during the summit - making it impossible to satisfy their demands in his two-room Moscow flat. It provided an extraordinary contrast to the Gorbachev press conference two days earlier, at which the Soviet leader also showed himself a complete master of his brief - except for one tiny lapse when he was questioned on domestic politics and the possible opposition to his reforms.

EC ministers toughen up joint action on terrorists

By WILLIAM DAWKINS IN MUNICH

EUROPEAN Community interior ministers yesterday agreed to toughen up joint action against the growing threat of international terrorism, including IRA attacks in continental Europe.

The accord, which includes stepping up exchange of information on terrorist groups, a UK-inspired study of possible co-operation in seizing terrorists' funds, and an exchange of forensic evidence, was hailed as one of the most substantial to come out of the so-called Trevi ministerial group.

It came after an exchange between Mr Douglas Hurd, UK Home Secretary, and Lord Cockfield, European Commissioner for the internal market, over British anxieties that Commission proposals for scrapping internal border controls would weaken the fight against terrorism.

This was only the latest sign of the growing tension between UK ministers and the commissioner.

Ministers accepted a scheme,

French trade gap worsens

FRANCE'S foreign trade deficit worsened in April to FFr2.1bn (£210m) after seasonal adjustments. The total deficit for the first four months of the year was FFr6.3bn, compared with a shortfall of FFr1.3bn in the same period.

Manufactured goods showed a trade deficit of FFr3bn in April, while food products recorded a surplus of FFr3.6bn and energy a deficit of FFr5.5bn.

Japan exports up

Japan's current account balance eased to \$7.1bn (£3.9bn) last month from \$8.2bn in April 1987. Exports were up 14.1 per cent in dollar terms to \$21.9bn, imports rose 30 per cent to \$13.5bn.

Peking protest

Peking university students marched into the centre of the Chinese capital early yesterday in defiance of a protest ban, and plastered posters around the campus following the murder of a fellow-student, Robert Thomson, reports.

About 1,000 students took part in the demonstration, the first involving the university since a spate of pro-democracy protests early last year.

The student, Cai Qingfeng, 22, was stabbed to death after an argument broke out with a group of youths early on Thursday.

Philips canteen row

Philips, the Dutch electronics giant, has been hit by the first labour strike since announcing it would lay off 20,000 employees in a bid to cut costs, Laura Baum reports from Amsterdam.

About 275 workers in company restaurants removed their aprons in protest at plans to privatise the 120 canteens, according to a union spokesman. Union members say their incomes would drop by up to a quarter if they had to switch to a food-industry contract.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE
The Financial Times proposes to publish this survey on:

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FINANCIAL TIMES

Union Carbide to appeal Bhopal ruling

By JAMES BUCHAN IN NEW YORK

UNION CARBIDE, the US chemical concern, said yesterday it would appeal to the Indian Supreme Court against a controversial lower court order that it pay \$122m in "interim compensation" to the victims of the Bhopal catastrophe of December 1984.

The company, which is not just confined to the British Isles, was clearly understood," said Mr Hurd.

In their communiqué, Trevi ministers condemned "recent murderous attacks" by the IRA as well as by ETA, the Basque separatist group and by the Japanese Red Army, a group operating in Italy.

They agreed to swap officials and information in what is the widest international pact in the Trevi group's 12-year life.

A separate ministerial group agreed in outline that people seeking political asylum in the EC should be allowed to do so only in the country in which they first arrived.

Danish Nato crisis 'over'

By HILARY BARNES IN COPENHAGEN

MR Poul Schlüter, the Danish Prime Minister, formed a new government yesterday and asserted that a crisis in his country's relations with Nato, which prompted him to call early elections, was over.

"The problem is solved," he told a news conference after presenting to Queen Margrethe the members of a three-party coalition, including his own Conservative Party, the Liberals and the Radical Liberals, a party whose maverick stance on foreign affairs helped precipitate the row with Nato.

The Radical Liberals were among the bloc of parties which upset Denmark's allies by passing

a resolution in parliament that required the government to enforce more toughly its policy of not allowing nuclear weapons into Denmark.

London and Washington, which traditionally refuse to specify which of their ships carry nuclear arms, have suspended naval visits to Danish ports in response to the resolution.

The fact that the pro-Western

Mr Schlüter has brought the Radical Liberals into government indicates that a compromise formula over Nato policy has been patched together. But details of the formula will not be spelled out until a government statement on Tuesday.

Seven-party rebel alliance appears on the verge of collapse, writes Christina Lamb, recently in Alikhey

Afghan resistance: solid in battle, divided in victory

THE STREETS of Alikhey are littered with arms, some captured when the resistance seized the garrison two weeks ago and some brought in from Pakistan.

Unable to decide how to distribute them, commanders from the seven-party resistance alliance jealously guard piles of missiles and Kalashnikovs. A loudspeaker warns people to keep away from the weapons.

This is symptomatic of the problems of a resistance movement which counts amongst the best-equipped but least unified in history.

The very tenacity and independence of the Afghan guerrillas which ensured that the Soviet army could never defeat them, now threatens the future of the resistance alliance.

Reports come in daily of more posts falling to the resistance and Afghan troops defecting. Yet the last thing the resistance leaders seem ready for is victory. Even as the first Soviet troops left

Afghanistan, the fragile seven-party alliance was threatening to shatter.

An important date is June 15 when the term of the fundamentalist leader, Mr Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, as official spokesman of the alliance, comes to an end.

It is widely thought that he will refuse to hand the post over to the moderate Mr Pir Gallani, in which case a split between the three "moderate" and four "fundamentalist" parties is inevitable.

According to Mr Hamid Karzay, spokesman for the moderate Afghan National Liberation Front, a statement has already been prepared, announcing the party's defection. At issue is whether the new Afghanistan should be a fundamentalist Islamic republic as favoured by Mr Hekmatyar, or the traditional royalist state desired by the moderates.

Reports come in daily of more posts falling to the resistance and Afghan troops defecting. Yet the last thing the resistance leaders seem ready for is victory. Even as the first Soviet troops left

keep the alliance together. But the time has come for us to speak out.

Two years ago Mr Hekmatyar was receiving 40 per cent of the US, Saudi and Chinese arms distributed by the Pakistan government, which ANLF received only 1 per cent. This largesse earned him many supporters, their allegiance often vanishing once they had crossed the border.

Now most of the arms have been shifted inside Afghanistan to comply with the Geneva accord, Mr Hekmatyar's influence may be waning; his party has few good field commanders, and in a country where ancestry is all-important, an increasing number of Afghans are asking of Mr Hekmatyar: "Who is his father?"

In the last nine years of fighting no unifying political leader has emerged. Disillusioned by both the personal ambitions and luxurious lifestyles of the Peshawar-based leaders, which con-

trast sharply with the often appalling conditions in the refugee camps, people are once more turning to their tribal leaders for guidance.

Meetings have been taking place both inside refugee camps and inside Afghanistan, some demanding a return of exiling Zahir Shah, deposed in 1979.

Mr Karzay maintains that the king is not loved by the people but he is seen as the only person who can give them the security they so desperately need. Many commanders have joined in the call for the return of the king. A recent meeting of commanders and tribal elders from 11 provinces sent an influential tribal leader to discuss terms with Zahir Shah in Rome.

Royalist commanders are planning a Lol Jirga (a traditional Afghan decision-making forum comprising tribal elders, religious leaders, scholars and politicians) to be held in the royalist stronghold of Kandahar.

Recently its leader, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, has adopted a markedly softer approach, saying he will not oppose the king militarily and sees no point in attacking the departing Soviet forces.

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Gulbuddin Hekmatyar: may refuse to hand over

OVERSEAS NEWS

Pretoria bridles at Castro's Angola bravado

BY ANTHONY ROBINSON IN JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH AFRICA - which scuttled the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group initiative in 1986 rather than accept an accelerated timetable for talks with the African National Congress - is showing similar irritation with the great powers for agreeing during the Moscow summit a target date of September 29 for ending the war in Angola.

While Mr Ptk Botha, the Foreign Minister is balking at the idea of a European rather than African venue for the next round of four-power talks involving Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the US, General Magnus Malan, the Defence Minister, has bridled at recent remarks by Mr Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader.

Mr Castro is reported as having confirmed that crack units of the Cuban army and top pilots had

been sent to Angola and were pushing south towards the Angolan-Namibian border, where they intended to set up a new airbase. He also hurt South African military pride with his claim that South Africa had agreed to come to the negotiating table only because Cuban forces had inflicted heavy losses during battles around Cuito Cuanavale. This contradicted South African military claims that it lost only 31 men, the odd aircraft and a few armoured vehicles in heavy fighting, alongside its Unitas allies, in which up to 10,000 Angolan and Cuban soldiers were killed.

"Castro's provocative intransigence could be a major stumbling block in the way of the peace initiative," General Malan com-

mented, noting the contrast with what he called the pragmatism of the Angolan MPLA government and the Soviet leadership. "Castro's aggressive bravado could result in South Africa being forced to reconsider its good intentions in the peace attempts," he warned.

The general's refusal "to be blackmailed into negotiations" has strengthened the doubts of US and other Western governments about the real willingness of South Africa to grant independence to Namibia under the terms of UN resolution 435. This provides for elections to a constituent assembly under United Nations surveillance and would probably give a majority to the South West Africa People's Organisation under Mr Sam Nujoma. Swapo's military wing

has been fighting a guerrilla war for independence from base in southern Angola for over two decades.

But the prospect of an avowedly Marxist government in Windhoek is only one of the bitter pills Pretoria would have to swallow in return for the withdrawal of Cuban forces and Soviet bloc advisers from Angola and a "neutral and non-aligned" coalition government in Luanda. For the South African Defence Force the loss of Namibia would not only bring the borders with independent black African states south to the line of the Orange river, it would also mean the loss of military bases in the Caprivi Strip and elsewhere from which Pretoria is able to intimidate half the continent.

Fidel Castro: hurt South African military pride

Court move threatens SA strike

BY ANTHONY ROBINSON IN JOHANNESBURG

ANGLO American Corporation, South Africa's biggest mining house, last night took legal action against senior officials of the National Union of Mineworkers in a bid to prevent workers taking part in a three-day "national peaceful protest".

Millions of black workers in factories, mines and workshops throughout the country are expected to join the protest on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. It was called by the Congress of South African Trade Unions last month to protest against the government's ban on 17 anti-apartheid organisations and proposed legal restrictions on the trade unions.

Senior officials from Cosatu

and the smaller black consciousness-oriented National Council of Trade Unions have been careful to leave the terms of the protest vague and not call openly for a strike or stayaway. At local level, however, Anglo and other employers, claim that shop stewards are unequivocally urging their members to strike and threatening workers who do not respond. This, Anglo claims in a move against union officials in its Orange Free State mines, would constitute an illegal strike in violation of the recognition agreement between Anglo and the NUM.

Other major employers, including the engineering federation Seisa, and Sasol, the giant oil-

from-coal corporation, have also warned workers that participation in strike action next week could lead to fines or dismissal.

Management's hard-nosed response to the prospect of major economic dislocation next week reflects a generally tougher management line against the unions since last year's damaging three-week gold mine strike.

Employers' organisations are worried about the impact of a three-day stayaway, particularly since the action would come shortly before traditional protest days in opposition to the two-year-old national state of emergency on June 12 and the June 15 anniversary of the 1976 Soweto riots.

Many of the bombings and grenade attacks have taken place in the black townships but the worst has taken place outside magistrates' courts.



Fidel Castro: hurt South African military pride

Bomb outside bank near Johannesburg kills four

BY ANTHONY ROBINSON

A BOMB exploded in a lunchtime crowd outside a bank in Roodepoort, near Johannesburg, yesterday killing three black men and a white woman and injuring 19 others.

The blast was the latest evidence of a rising tide of urban terrorist attacks on civilian targets in which 14 people have been killed and another 88 injured since the beginning of this year.

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Israelis halt gardeners' 'subversive' self-help plan

Andrew Whitley on the military's anger at a popular Palestinian agronomy project

THEY ARRIVED at the little concrete blockhouse a few hundred yards from the Biblical Shepherds Field, near Bethlehem, in a steady trickle from the early morning onwards. Some want a shekel's worth (about 40 pence) of seeds, others ant poison, others again simply want to talk to Dr Jad or one of his helpers about the problems they are having with the fruit saplings they bought the previous week.

Dr Jad Isaac, a graduate of the University of East Anglia and member of the Food Research Institute at Norwich, is a political subversive, say the Israeli authorities. He was called in for questioning by the military earlier this week and told, in no uncertain terms, that his agricultural self-help centre had to close.

"No more games," he was warned by an investigator. "Your work is dangerous to the security of the area." The implied threat was that failure to comply would make him liable for administrative detention, six months' imprisonment without trial.

The object of the Shin Bet's attention is a rudimentary garden centre cum-agricultural extension school, working on a tiny profit margin to encourage out-of-work Palestinians to return to the land. Inside the blockhouse, insecticide is doled out in small plastic vials, manageable amounts for someone growing his first crop of tomatoes on a tiny plot; outside, chicken hatches and irrigation drip piping - all bought from Israel - burn in the hot sun.

The harassment began immediately after the warning message was delivered. Jeep loads of soldiers would be stationed outside his house - a commodious, fancy villa in the modern Arab style - at all hours of the day and night, revving their engines and sounding their horns. At night, powerful flashlights would be played on his bedroom window.

Yesterday, as the balding Palestinian agronomist anxiously debated the future of the business he and three other whistleblowers spontaneously

Settlers shoot dead West Bank Arab

Jewish settlers killed a West Bank villager yesterday as Palestinians began a three-day strike to protest against a return Middle East peace mission by US Secretary of State George Shultz. Reuter reports from Jerusalem.

Mustapha Ahmed Odeh al-Khalilia, 20, was killed by a single bullet in the chest fired when settlers clashed with residents of Shaykh village near Hebron, according to Palestinians.

Most Arab shops in the occupied areas were closed in response to the strike call.

decided to set up two and a half months ago, clubbing together to put in \$15,000 of their own money, another of the group was summoned by the military government.

These are solid citizens approaching middle age, these four members of what the Israelis suspect as being the sinister agricultural branch of a network of "popular committees" springing up across the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Apart from Dr Isaac, a lecturer at Bethlehem University well known before the *intifada* for his agricultural extension work, one is a wealthy civil contractor, another a teacher and the last an agricultural engineer. None had a previous record of political activity.

"All we have in common," protested the former East Anglia graduate student, "is our love of gardens, our close friendship and our love of cards."

In some cases, these local committees, responsible for such activities - mundane but essential - as street cleaning and welfare, have succeeded in replacing the moribund civil administration for the occupied territories. And, in truth, it is this which has really unnerved the Israeli authorities, bent on restoring the Palestinian population's dependence on themselves as fast as possible.

"It is permitted for the Europeans and Americans to help us, but not for us to help ourselves," laughed the schoolteacher. "Agriculture is the main sector of the West Bank economy. The Israelis should be paying us to do this, not trying to close us down."

Compromise hope in New Caledonia

By Ian Davidson in Paris

LEADERS of the European and Melanesian communities in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia, long at war over the choice of independence or loyalty to France, have started talking of compromise, based on the idea of provisional partition, under French sovereignty.

The idea has been launched by Mr Jacques Lafleur, leader of the European pro-Gaullist RPRC party, and cautiously welcomed by Mr Jean-Marie Tjibaou, leader of the Melanesian independent party FLNKS.

Mr Lafleur proposed the creation of three districts, of which one, in the south and south-west would be dominated by the Europeans, and the other two, in the north and the Loyalty Islands, would be dominated by Melanesians. After 10 years, these districts would vote on independence.

Mr Tjibaou said he would agree to the proposal if the transitional period opened the way to independence.

Mr Lafleur's proposal coincides with the closing phase of the visit of the six-man team sent out to make proposals to the new Socialist government.

French-NZ chill is 'easing'

By Dai Hayward in Wellington

THE DIPLOMATIC chill between France and New Zealand since the bombing of the Greenpeace vessel Rainbow Warrior in Auckland Harbour three years ago appears to have thawed considerably.

A meeting in New York between Mr Roland Dumas, France's Foreign Minister, and his New Zealand counterpart, Mr Russell Marshall, to discuss the future of the convicted Rainbow Warrior bombers, Major Alain Mafart and Captain Dominique Prieur, was held "in an agreeably better climate," Mr Marshall said.

Major Mafart and Capt. Prieur were sentenced to jail in New Zealand, but were transferred to the South Pacific atoll of Hao under an agreement negotiated by Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar, the UN Secretary General.

The agents were returned to Paris by Mr Jacques Chirac, the former French Premier, just before the recent presidential election. New Zealand wants the two returned to Hao.

Both sides agreed they had "vigorously" to seek a solution to the Rainbow Warrior issue.

Call for Australian immigration reform

By Chris Sherwell in Sydney

AUSTRALIA should focus more attention on skills in its immigration programme and introduce new selection criteria for immigrants, a government advisory committee has recommended.

The committee's report was tabled in parliament yesterday and focuses on a sensitive political issue.

The character of Australia's immigration has changed since the Second World War as central European and Asian settlers have joined the country's predominantly Anglo-Celtic population.

The Government said yesterday it had made no decisions on the committee's proposals, but last month, in evident anticipation of the report, it increased the number of immigrants allowed into the country in the financial year ending this month.

The increase, from 120,000 to 132,000, is being taken up by business immigrants and skilled workers. According to the committee, skill levels are critical if immigration is to contribute to economic performance.

The committee proposes an "open" category of immigration beyond family immigration and the refugee and humanitarian programme. Selection would be based on seven sets of criteria, in a specified order.

Priority would be given to labour market skills and entrepreneurial and special talents. These would be followed by age, language capacity, kinship in Australia, other links with Australia and the attributes of the prospective immigrant's spouse.

On numbers, the committee says there should be a programme of 150,000 immigrants a year from 1989-90 to 1990-91. In the first three years this should consist of 35,000 in the "open" category, 15,000 under the refugee and humanitarian pro-

gramme and 40,000 under family immigration.

The committee was headed by Dr Stephen Fitzgerald, a former ambassador to China.

On existing policies, it says that without immediate reform, current selection mechanisms will deliver many tens of thousands of immigrants more than the planned programme.

What is more serious, it says, is that public support for immigration is threatened by widespread mistrust and a falling consensus. The programme, it says, is not identified in the public mind with the national interest, and must be given a convincing rationale.

People were concerned about immigration numbers, the composition of the intake and the immigrant's role in changing Australian society.

Race was an issue "requiring attention". The committee says there is "confusion and mistrust" about multi-culturalism, a cornerstone of Australian immigration policy. "Many people, from a variety of occupational and cultural backgrounds, perceive it as divisive," it says.

It says the status of Australian citizenship is undervalued, with a million immigrants having declined to take it up.

Government should move to restrict the non-survival benefits and privileges available to non-citizens, it recommends.

It recommends that selection methods be given a sharper economic focus, so that the public becomes convinced that the programme is in Australia's interests.

"Improving the skills level of immigrants is critical if immigration is to contribute to enhanced economic performance and improvements in living standards in the longer term," it says.

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THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

Reagan hails new era in superpower relations

The following are extracts of President Reagan's speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Guildhall in London

"I WONDER if you can imagine what it is for an American to be standing this place. Back in the States, we are terribly proud of anything more than a few hundred years old; some even see my election to the Presidency as America's attempt to show our European cousins that we too have a regard for antiquity."

I have come from Moscow to report to you, for, truly, the relationship between the United States and Great Britain has been critical to Nato's success and the cause of freedom.

The people of Great Britain, the United States, and other allied nations have, for 44 years, made enormous sacrifices to keep our alliance strong and our military ready. For them, we embarked in this decade on a new postwar strategy, a forward strategy of freedom, a strategy of public candour about the moral and fundamental differences between statism and democracy but also a strategy of vigorous diplomatic engagement. A policy that rejects both the inevitability of war or the permanence of totalitarian rule; a policy based on realism that seeks not just treaties for treaties' sake but the recognition and resolution of fundamental differences with our adversaries.

The pursuit of this policy has just now taken me to Moscow and let me say: I believe this policy is bearing fruit. Quite possibly, we are beginning to take down the barriers of the postwar era; quite possibly, we are entering a new era in history, a time of lasting change in the Soviet Union. We will have to see. But if so, it is because of the steadfastness of the allies — the democracies — for more than 40 years, and especially in this decade.

The history of our time will undoubtedly include a footnote about how, during this decade and the last, the voices of retreat and hopelessness reached crescendo in the West — insisting the only way to peace was unilateral disarmament; proposing nuclear freezes; opposing deployment of counterbalancing weapons such as intermediate-range missiles or the more recent concept of strategic defence systems.

These same voices ridiculed the notion of going beyond arms control — the hope of doing something more than merely establishing artificial limits within which arms build-ups could continue all but unabated. Arms reduction would never work, they said, and when the Soviets left the negotiating table in Geneva for 15 months, they proclaimed disaster.

And yet it was our double-zero option, much maligned when first proposed, that provided the basis for the INF treaty, the first treaty ever that did not just control offensive weapons but reduced them and, yes, actually eliminated an entire class of US and Soviet nuclear missiles.

This treaty, last month's development in Afghanistan, the changes we see in the Soviet Union — these are momentous events. Not conclusive. But momentous.

And that is why, although his

tory will duly note that we, too, heard voices of denial and doubt. It is those who spoke with hope and strength who will be best remembered. And here I want to say that through all the troubles of the last decade, one such firm, eloquent voice, a voice that proclaimed proudly the cause of the Western alliance and human freedom, has been heard — a voice that never sacrificed its anti-Communist credentials or its realistic appraisal of change in the Soviet Union. But because it came from the longest serving leader in the alliance, it did become the first to suggest that we could "do business" with Mr Gorbachev.

So let me discharge my first official duty here today. Prime Minister, the achievements of the Moscow summit as well as the Geneva and Washington summits say much about your valour and strength and, by virtue of the office you hold, that of the British people. So let me say, simply: At this hour in history, the Prime Minister, the entire world salutes you and your gallant people and gallant nation.

In a process reaching back as far as the founding of Nato and the Common Market, the House

'Imagine, the President of the United States and the General Secretary of the Soviet Union walking together in Red Square talking about a growing personal friendship'

of Western Europe, together with the United States, Canada, Japan, and others this House of Democracy engaged in an active diplomacy while sparking a startling growth of democratic institutions and free markets all across the globe — in short, an expansion of the frontiers of freedom and a lessening of the chances of war.

So it is within this context that I report now on events in Moscow. On Wednesday, at 8:20 Greenwich time, Mr Gorbachev and I exchanged the instruments of ratification of the INF treaty. So, too, we made tangible progress toward the Start treaty on strategic weapons. Such a treaty, with all its implications, is, I believe, now within our grasp. But part of the realism and candour we were determined to bring to negotiations with the Soviets meant refusing to put all the weight of these negotiations and our bilateral relationship on the single issue of arms control. As I never tire of saying, nations do not distrust each other because they are armed, they are armed because they distrust each other. So equally important items on the agenda dealt with critical issues, like regional conflicts, human rights, and bilateral exchanges.

With regard to regional conflicts, here, too, we are now in the third week of the pull-out of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The importance of this step should not be underestimated. Our third area of discussion was bilateral contacts between our

peoples. An expanding program of student exchanges and the opening of cultural centres — progress towards a broader understanding of each other.

And finally, on the issue of human rights — granting people the right to speak, write, travel, and worship freely, there are signs of greater individual freedom. Now originally I was going to give you just an accounting on these facts. But, you know, on my first day in Moscow, Mr Gorbatchev, a Russian saying, "It is good to see something more than to hear about it a hundred times. So if I might go beyond our formal agenda today and offer just a moment or two of personal reflection on the country I saw for the first time."

In all aspects of Soviet life, the talk is of progress toward democratic reform. In the economy, in political institutions, in religious, social, and artistic life. It is called *glasnost* — openness. It is *perestroika* — restructuring. Mr Gorbachev and I discussed his upcoming party conference where many of these reforms will be debated and, perhaps, adopted. Such things as official accountability, limitations on length of service in office, an independent judiciary, revisions of the criminal law, and lowering taxes on co-operatives. In short, giving individuals more freedom to run their own affairs, to control their own destinies.

To those of us familiar with the postwar era, all of this is cause for shaking the head in wonder. Imagine, the President of the United States and the General Secretary of the Soviet Union walking together in Red Square talking about a growing personal friendship and meeting, together, average citizens, realising how much our people have in common.

Indeed, the core of the tour comprised a series of "Bessie initiatives" — the Albert Dock, the new Tate Gallery, Wavertree Technology Park and the Merseyside Development Corporation. However, unlike in recent years, the City of Liverpool played an enthusiastic part, with a civic dinner last night at which Mr Kevan Coombes, the Labour leader, pledged wholehearted co-operation with the private sector.

It was a special moment in a week of special moments. My personal impression of Mr Gorbachev is that he is a serious man seeking serious reform.

And yet, while the Moscow summit showed great promise and the response of the Soviet people was heartening, let me interject here a note of caution and, I hope, prudence. It has never been disputed between the free peoples and the peoples of the Soviet Union that have been at the heart of postwar tensions and conflicts. No, disputes among governments over the pursuit of statism and expansionism have been the central point in our difficulties.

Now that the allies are strong and expansionism is receding around the world and in the Soviet Union, there is hope. And we look to this trend to continue. We must do all that we can to assist it. And this means openly acknowledging positive change.

Mr Michael Parkinson, head of the centre for urban studies and the university's guru on Liverpool council budget crises and matters left-wing, said that Militant was a minority, spent force now excluded from all positions of power by a restructured Labour party. Professor Graeme Davies, the vice-chancellor and another prime Boomer, concurred.

What was generally agreed was that Merseyside's problems were now more concerned with public relations and promotion than actual difficulties. One of British Rail's senior trippers confirmed, for example, that industrial relations in the area were the least of his worries compared with other places.

Mr George Knowles, commercial attaché to the US Embassy, thought that the trip had broken new ground in public relations for industrial development. "Swanson put on a very good show in London promoting itself but it does not compare with this," he said.

"This has been memorable. More important is that lots of American companies are looking for UK partners. I have discovered that there are hundreds of businesses here we just have not got in our computer."

Mr Gorbachev said: "Three years ago I would not have accepted an invitation for a trip like this. I would have liked to have met more Merseyside businessmen to assess the prospects for investment banking here, but it has been worthwhile."

Mr Piper said: "I suspect that many people here have rejected the idea on out of hand before now. The best we can hope to achieve is to tip the balance a little. I hope we have done it."

It is in this sense that the best indicator of how much we care about freedom is what we say about freedom; it is in this sense, words truly are actions. And there is one added and quite extraordinary benefit to this sort of realism and public candour. This is also the best way to avoid war or conflict. Too often in the past, the adversaries of freedom forgot the reserves of strength and resolve among free peoples, too often they interpreted conciliatory words as weakness, too often they miscalculated and under-estimated the willingness of free men and women to resist to the end. Words of freedom remind them otherwise.

This is the lesson we have learned, the lesson of the last war and, yes, the lesson of Munich. But it is also the lesson taught by Sir Winston, by London in the Blitz, by the enduring pride and faith of the British people.

UK NEWS

Merseyside woos City investors on Boom trip

By Ian Hamilton Fazey,
Northern Correspondent

"MANY PEOPLE were cynical on the way up here. I think we are all going to be much less so on the way back," said Mr Roger Gewolb yesterday at the end of two days intensive sightseeing, eating, drinking, entertainment and discussions on Merseyside.

Mr Gewolb, a financier with City and Industrial Securities, was one of 120 business leaders from London invited to the region by Boom — Business Opportunities on Merseyside.

The trip was paid for by Boom's private sector supporters, all determined to prove that the area is a suitable place for investment.

Seven years ago Mr Michael Heseltine, the then Environment Secretary, tried something similar as he struggled to redefine the Government's inner-city policy in the wake of the Toxteth riots. He and his staff called captains of industry, commerce and the City to turn up and get 40 of them, enough to fit into what became known as his "moneybox".

It is a symptom of how things are changing that Boom, which is led by Sir Geoffrey Piper of Deloitte, Haskins and Sells, one of the biggest accountancy practices in Liverpool, had to charter a special train this time to carry people from the capital and to hire a fleet of buses to move them around.

Indeed, the core of the tour comprised a series of "Bessie initiatives" — the Albert Dock, the new Tate Gallery Park and the Merseyside Development Corporation. However, unlike in recent years, the City of Liverpool played an enthusiastic part, with a civic dinner last night at which Mr Kevan Coombes, the Labour leader, pledged wholehearted co-operation with the private sector.

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Ferranti-led consortium wins RAF laser contract

BY DAVID WHITE, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A UK consortium led by Ferranti has beaten US competitors for a contract to supply the Royal Air Force with advanced laser equipment for its Tornado low-level fighters.

The order is reckoned to be worth more than £250m, including support, and further deals are being negotiated with other countries operating the Anglo-German aircraft.

The consortium of Ferranti, British Aerospace and GEC Sensors clinched the deal against rivals from Martin Marietta and Ford Aerospace of the US, both of which have in-house capacity for such equipment. Thomson-CSF, the French electronics group, is also understood to be bidding for the contract.

Details of the price and the number of units to be supplied

were withheld for fear of compromising export negotiations.

The advanced laser designator pods, designed to identify targets by day or night, are for use with the RAF's squadrons of Tornado GR1 combat aircraft, and are designed to be compatible with current and planned laser-guided weapons.

They will replace the obsolescent US-supplied Paveway designator, currently deployed on Buccaneer aircraft, which relies on a TV camera and can only be used in daytime.

The consortium's Thermal Imaging Airborne Laser Designator (Talid) equipment is undergoing trials at the Royal Aerospace Establishment at Farnborough.

It includes infra-red imaging equipment already chosen as a night-flying device for the Tor-

nado GR1 as well as the Harrier GR5 and the US version of the Harrier, the AV-8B, in service with the US Marine Corps.

The Ministry of Defence said that Talid's small size and light weight were decisive in the choice.

The contract conditions, based on a fixed price, are in line with the ministry's policy for placing the risk in the hands of the prime contractor, in this case Ferranti.

The ministry said the deal would bring investment and secure existing jobs.

Ferranti Defence Systems will make the pod itself and be responsible for integration of the system, which relies on thermal imagers from GEC and automatic video tracking equipment from British Aerospace, enabling the aircraft to lock on to an image.

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Reaction mixed to new rules on clearing

By David Barchard

BUILDING SOCIETIES yesterday gave a mixed welcome to moves announced on Thursday by the UK clearing banks relaxing the requirements for joining the clearing system through which money payments are transmitted.

"This decision means that only the top nine building societies or so can join the clearing system and none of them below the top three can join Eftpos," said Mr Howard Aiken, general manager of Electronic Funds Transfer, the company that organised a group application for the clearing system by seven building societies.

Eftpos is a card-based electronic point-of-sale payment system being jointly developed by the banks at a cost of several billion pounds.

The Association for Payment Clearing Services (Apacs) said on Thursday that it would not accept a group application but instead would allow new members to join Bacs, the company that clears high-volume electronic payments, if they handled more than 5m transactions a year, about a third of the previous requirement.

This change means that larger societies such as Leeds Permanent and Woolwich will be able to join, but it excludes some of the seven societies that made the joint application, notably Cheltenham & Gloucester and Bristol & West.

Mr Richard Hatt, Assistant General Manager of Cheltenham & Gloucester, said yesterday that he was very disappointed by the decision.

"However, we have not given up hope," he said. "There is to be an EFT meeting next Wednesday at which the matter will be discussed again."

Mr Mick Williamson, deputy chief executive of Apacs, said it was unlikely there would be any further change.

"The line has to be drawn somewhere and there will always be someone below it," he said. "We have made a very substantial adjustment to our entry requirements."

One solution being canvassed by some building societies yesterday was that smaller societies might clear the transaction requirement by "piggy-backing," with one society agreeing to process the transactions of another.

This is unlikely to be acceptable to Bristol & West and Cheltenham & Gloucester because they are strong regional competitors.

There is also some regret that Apacs has not eased the requirements for entry into Eftpos, which is due to be launched next year. It appears that the three largest building societies, Halifax, Abbey National and Nationwide, will remain as the only members.

Biggins Hill to change hands

By Michael Donne, Aerospace Correspondent

THE MANAGEMENT contract for Biggin Hill airfield, near Bromley in Kent, is being passed by Bromley Borough Council to Airports UK, the airport management organisation which is part of the BAA group (formerly the British Airports Authority).

The airport, which was a famous fighter airfield during the Second World War, and is now a business aircraft centre for London and the south-east of England, has until now been managed by the Bromley council and a private company, Surrey Aviation.

Mr Chris Barlow, managing director of Airports UK, said yesterday that his company would agree to let the airport to corporate business aircraft users, particularly in Europe, and would seek to improve facilities.

Redundancies at Chase

BY DAVID LASCELLES

CHASE MANHATTAN is making 25 people redundant in its London institutional equity department because of declining volumes.

The New York banking group said the redundancies were part of a plan to focus activities on areas of the market in which it could provide full research and market-making services.

The redundancies include 11 market makers in brewery and food manufacturing and retailing stocks.

These

UK NEWS

Michael Donne on a BA experiment to sample passengers' views

Airlines step up pressure on smokers

BRITISH AIRWAYS has extended until the end of this month its experiment with no-smoking flights on the London-Glasgow shuttle, to provide a wider sample of passengers' views before deciding for or against any permanent ban.

The London-Glasgow trial began at the end of April and was due to end last week. Other experimental flights will operate on flights from Heathrow to Vienna and Gothenburg for one month from June 6, and on some Heathrow-New York and Gatwick-Los Angeles flights, also for one month from November 7.

Although BA stresses that it retains an open mind on the issue, its experiments are only a small part of what is an accelerating campaign against smoking throughout the airline industry.

This trend is partly due to recognition of the damage to health, not only for the smoker but through "passive smoking" — inhaling someone else's fumes at places of work and on public transport. For airlines there are also safety considerations.

Airlines and regulatory agencies have taken action to try to prevent fires caused by smoking or fuel ignited in cigarette cases. These measures include fire-resistant no-smoking rules, and led the airline to claim that fewer than one in 10 passengers would oppose a permanent ban.

Initially, the UK smoking lobby, led by Forest — Freedom Organisation for the Right to Enjoy Smoking Tobacco — claimed that "the only fair and objective way of assessing passengers' opinions on in-flight smoking would be to put all the possible options before a representative sample and let it decide between them."

Nevertheless, pressures for strengthening no-smoking restrictions are increasing. The International Air Transport Association estimates that whereas 15 years ago up to 60 per cent of airline seats worldwide went to non-smokers, today the figure is

IN THE US all flights of less than two hours became no-smoking by law from April 23. One airline, Northwest, has banned smoking on all its North American flights. California has a ban on all flights within the state.

Air Canada has designated all flights of up to two hours as no-smoking since last December 5. Canadian Airlines International has smoking on all its short-haul Boeing 737 flights.

The Australian Government

closed to 80-85 per cent.

In response to the pressures, the bans are increasing. In Britain, Air UK has been a no-smoking airline since March 27, following trial flights and an in-flight survey in which 77 per cent favoured a total ban.

British Airways is therefore well behind other airlines in moving against smoking. Its experiments are to see if they confirm preliminary research which showed a majority of passengers in favour of tougher no-smoking rules, and led the airline to claim that fewer than one in 10 passengers would oppose a permanent ban.

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This is what BA believes it is doing by conducting the experiments. Nevertheless, Forest has reacted strongly. On May 24 it

sent to Lord King, chairman of BA, 1,000 postcards, each, according to Forest, signed by a shuttle passenger, urging the retention of separate smoking areas.

At the same time, Forest published the results of a survey of Scottish attitudes, prepared for it by System Three Scotland, covering a sample of 1,068 people, of whom only a minority (45 per cent) were smokers.

The survey indicated that, on domestic flights, 49 per cent wanted separate smoking and no-smoking areas, 45 per cent wanted a total ban, 4 per cent wanted no restrictions and 1 per cent didn't know.

On European flights, 58 per cent were in favour of separate areas, with 37 per cent wanting a ban, with again 4 per cent wanting no restrictions and 1 per cent "don't know".

In response, BA points out that over the five weeks of the shuttle experiment to end-May, it carried nearly 97,000 passengers on Glasgow-London flights, and that of those passengers the great majority appear to have accepted the ban. There have been only a few protests at the check-in desks and some letters of complaint from individual passengers.

BA has some doubts about the Forest postcards. It claims that

banned smoking on internal flights from last December 1, while other countries with such bans include Turkey and Israel (for flights from Israeli airports). Singapore Airlines has banned smoking on some flights between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

In Scandinavia, domestic operators such as Lansteigen in Sweden and Braathens in Norway ban smoking, and SAS is to experiment with a ban on domestic flights from July 2 to August 13.

about 50 per cent bore no flight numbers, which meant that they could not be confirmed as coming from shuttle passengers, while another 25 per cent bore flight numbers of other airlines.

The Geneva-based International Foundation of Airline Passengers' Association has conducted its own survey, covering some 28,000 frequent travellers in more than 100 countries between April and July last year.

This showed that some 37 per cent of passengers worldwide wanted a ban on smoking on all flights, while another 11 per cent wanted a ban on flights of up to two hours.

Of the remainder, 25 per cent wanted separate cabins for smokers. Another 19 per cent were prepared to accept "divided cabins" — using a partition or curtain to separate smokers from non-smokers. Only 2 per cent made no distinction between smokers and non-smokers, and 6 per cent did not care.

For the airlines, measuring the significance of such surveys is difficult while trying to implement them to satisfy all preferences is even tougher.

One reason is that separate cabins (which many travellers genuinely seem to want) do not necessarily mean that one group can escape the other's fumes.

Tests by Britannia, the UK's second largest airline, on a Boeing 737 jet have shown that the valves in air conditioning systems become clogged with tar and nicotine from cigarette smoke, rendering them ineffective for all passengers, no matter where they are sitting.

The experiments are not yet over, and the battle between the pro and anti-smoking lobbies will become fiercer. It is clear that smoking is likely to remain a controversial issue in civil aviation for a long time to come.

United Biscuits cool towards approach to buy Halifax plant

BY IAN HAMILTON FAHEY, NORTHERN CORRESPONDENT



Robert Clarke: resolved not to sell plant as a going concern

ning a biscuit factory is like turning a wheel with my little finger. I am sure we could do it more efficiently. We would be happy with a small margin to keep the factory going."

The prize the bidder sees is the more open European market after 1992, when he would expand

production into higher value-added products for sale throughout the Community.

In meetings with Mr Michael Ellison, Calderdale Borough Council's chief executive, council political leaders and private sector representatives involved in the BIC partnership, Mr Robert Clarke, managing director of United Biscuits, has been adamant from the outset that the Halifax plant would not be sold as a going concern.

They were told that UB would rather scrap the plant's machinery than allow it to be operated by another biscuit-maker. However, United Biscuits said it would not seek to profit from the sale of the land or buildings if they could be put to other uses.

The suggestion of a purchase by a small independent operator was put to Mr Clarke this week by Mr Ellison, who was told that nothing had been said to make a change in policy likely.

The next stage will be further talks between the would-be buyer and the group of council and business leaders which runs the BIC partnership.

Tube chiefs attacked for safety lapse

LONDON UNDERGROUND managers were criticised yesterday at the King's Cross disaster inquiry for their "collective failure" over many years to minimise the outbreak of fires on the network.

"In the early 1980s times were hard, and we took low pay rises," he said yesterday. "But now it is not a poor industry by any means, and it is about time that the workers are rewarded."

Mr Richard Warburton, director-general of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, said it was imperative that the new post of chief safety inspector for the Underground, being created following the fire in which 31 died, should be filled from outside the organisation.

London Underground reports and documents had led him to the conclusion there had been "collective failure from the most senior management level downwards over many years to minimise the outcome of fire."

Managers had also failed to plan to control large-scale incidents involving a potential loss of life.

Of the new chief safety inspector, promised as one of the Underground's 101 actions after the fire, Mr Warburton said: "My own view is that it is imperative that it is an external appointment. New thinking has to come in to advise the directors — someone who has had a broader experience outside this undertaking and has had experience in looking at large-scale organisations and probably has been using more of the modern techniques."

Management's belief that the large number of fires without personal injury indicated there was no cause for concern had turned the proper approach to safety "on its head."

Mr Donald Fennell, QC, the inquiry chairman, intervened during questioning of Mr Warburton by Mr Lionel Read, QC, counsel for the Underground, on its safety record.

"It seems to me that, as railmen, London Underground had a very good record; my trouble is that they were running a transport system and they forgot about the stations," said the chairman.

Paisley 'ready to go to jail'

By Our Belfast Correspondent

THE REV Ian Paisley, leader of Ulster's Democratic Unionist Party, said yesterday he would serve a 30-day prison sentence rather than pay fines of £200 imposed for taking part in two illegal parades last year.

Mr Paisley, MP for North Antrim, took part in Apprentice Boys' parades in Dromara and Stoneyford last summer. The parades were illegal because the seven days' notice required by the Royal Ulster Constabulary under new public order legislation was not given.

Mr Paisley said after the case at Lisburn Magistrates Court yesterday that he would not be paying the fines and was prepared to go to jail.

Fifteen other people who admitted offences under the legislation were given conditional discharges. Mr Chris Milner, resident magistrate, said he was making an exception in Mr Paisley's case because he had previous convictions.

So we shall have a better base from which to address the needs of the 1990s," he said. "In the event you may not find it necessary after all to contemplate making provision for the continuation of house-building at the average levels of recent years."

However, he agreed that the final figure for new housing will, he emphasised, depend on the interpretation of a number of factors. These would include the extent to which simple people — who might form more than 80 per cent of the additional households — would wish to occupy separate dwellings. Another factor will be the success of the Government's measures to bring more vacant dwellings into use.

Mr Paisley thought that housing needs for this period could easily be met if housebuilding simply continued at about the average level of the last few years. However, Lord Sandford said in his letter that the conference's assessment was that the

planning situation was already responding to the changing situation and that by 1992 the housing stock would be substantially higher than had been originally expected.

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His letter was couched in cautious terms as conference officials are discussing the figures with the Environment Department. The Environment Secretary is required to consult with the conference and take its

advice into account before giving planning guidance to the region.

Lord Sandford will meet Mr Ridley on June 16 to discuss the housing projections and the conference will discuss the matter on June 18. In his letter Lord Sandford accepted the recent projection that the number of households in the south-east would rise by nearly 1m by the end of the century. He agreed this must be taken into account in planning the region's development.

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FINANCIAL TIMES

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Saturday June 4 1988

Sterling spurned

FINANCIAL MARKETS appear to be unable to chew gum and walk at the same time. This is the only plausible explanation of the events of the last week, during which the pound fell abruptly from its status as the world's favourite major currency to being its least favourite.

The monomania of the markets has turned its attention to interest rates. Indeed, whenever the markets become reasonably convinced that stability among the major exchange rates is likely for the foreseeable future (which may be no more than a few days), it is to interest rates they turn.

What has been catching the eye of the foreign exchange markets has been the recent improvement in the attractiveness of US short term interest rates vis à vis those in Germany, Japan and, above all, the UK. The non-accommodating monetary stance of the US monetary authorities, in the face of an unexpectedly dynamic US economy, has led to a rise in the rate of interest on federal funds of about 1% a percentage point since the beginning of May, with rates of interest on US three-month certificates of deposit rising to a similar extent. Over the same period, comparable interest rates have remained unchanged in yen, those in the D-Mark have risen by a mere tenth of a percentage point, while those in sterling had fallen, by the beginning of this week, by 1% of a percentage point.

Stronger dollar

Such changes in relative rates of interest have powerful effects on the movement of short term capital, whenever substantial movements in exchange rates are not in prospect. So the effect has been a marked strengthening in the dollar. Against the D-Mark, for example, the dollar has risen by some 3 per cent since the beginning of May. It has even strengthened marginally against the yen, though largely in the course of this week. Meanwhile, sterling has finally – and abruptly – fallen out of favour.

Of course, if markets pay attention to differential interest rates and ignore probable movements of the exchange rates, they are likely to be confounded and, in fact, the dollar may well strengthen. There could then be some tightening of monetary policy in West Germany and Japan, especially as the present course of policy is regarded as carrying inflationary risks in both countries.

For Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, the strength of the dollar has proved most welcome and would probably be still more welcome if it encouraged higher interest rates in West Germany. With another game in town, the financial markets are looking at the fickle attentions of the foreign exchange markets for long.

Perhaps they have even come to agree with the Chancellor and the Bank of England on the inflationary pressures in the UK economy.

If so, it is probably because the Chancellor himself has convinced them. With interest rates down by 1½ percentage points since mid-March and his tactical victory over the Prime Minister, Mr Lawson has shown the markets that he is quite serious about currency stability. He has probably convinced them, too, that he is willing to risk a further expansion of domestic demand and deterioration in the current account if that is the necessary consequence of his commitment. With those policies, the strength of sterling is, in truth, unsustainable. Mr Lawson is more than a prophet. He is a prophet who can make his prophecy come true.

Happy position

In consequence, he finds himself in the happy position of doing what he wanted all along. The ½ percentage point base rate increase of Thursday may be regarded as a down-payment on the further tightening that will occur if the rate of exchange against the D-Mark falls further. The increase was modest, suggesting that the Government is operating with a soft exchange rate band, but its existence cannot be doubted.

Does the UK Government finally have what it wants: a firm exchange rate and high interest rates? Unfortunately, no. The policy remains internally inconsistent. Whenever the exchange rate is expected to stabilise, the interest rate differential vis à vis other currencies, especially the D-Mark, will come under attack. Whenever the interest rate differential is reduced under such an attack, the exchange rate will come under pressure.

It is most improbable, therefore, that higher interest rates can endure (especially if further increases are in the offing). The UK is simply demonstrating what happens to interest rates when there is an attempt to stabilise exchange rates between two economies with different underlying monetary conditions. Exchange rate stability is bought at the price of greatly increased interest rate variability. It is quite doubtful whether this is a sensible bargain.

The Chancellor has benefited from the latest infatuation of the foreign exchange markets. But a further period of doubt about global imbalances and US inflation is all too likely, with downward pressure on the dollar followed, perhaps, by another lunge after with sterling. Sterling can enjoy being a wild-card, for the moment, but is unlikely to evade the fickle attentions of the foreign exchange markets for long.

Present planning rules would not have allowed the 19th century railways

number of households is rising more rapidly than envisaged even a few years ago. The increase in the south-east between 1988 and 2001 is now put at 1m or 14 per cent. This, says Mr Ridley, does not reflect migration from north to south or even indigenous population growth. It is primarily the consequence of changing social trends: the tendency for people to get married later, divorce more frequently, and live independently for longer once elderly.

The demand could be choked off: divorce, for example, could be banned. But in a free and democratic society, says Mr Ridley, the Government should seek to accommodate rather than suppress the desires of ordinary people.

But what if the projections are wrong? They have been radically revised in the past three years – they could surely change again? The present crop of rather serious teenagers could marry early and prove faithful spouses; divorce could become less popular. In any case, there can be no simple correlation between household numbers and demand for land or housing. The traditional English semi-detached house could fall out of fashion and more people could opt for space-saving flats and apartments, as they do on the Continent.

Projections and plans are unreliable, agrees Professor Alan Evans, an economist at Reading University. He thinks the flaws in present planning controls are better demonstrated by the existing supply-demand imbalance. If present policies make sense, why is building land in parts of the south-east worth up to 30 times as much as agricultural land for which planning permission has been denied? Why are land prices an ever-increasing proportion of the cost of new houses? Why are groups like Consortium Developments prepared to spend £600,000 fighting for the right to exploit a single site?

Planning policies, he argues, are failing not only to recognise the increase

Hunger for homes in the golden south

FT writers analyse the controversy over where to find land for new houses in south-east England

In numbers of households, but also the massive rise in real incomes since the war. When people get wealthier it is natural for them to want more space. Yet rocketing property prices are forcing people to live in cramped accommodation. "High-density estates have become virtually the only economical form of development in the private sector, yet this is often the type of housing that is most loathed by conservationists. We have the worst of both worlds," concludes Professor Evans.

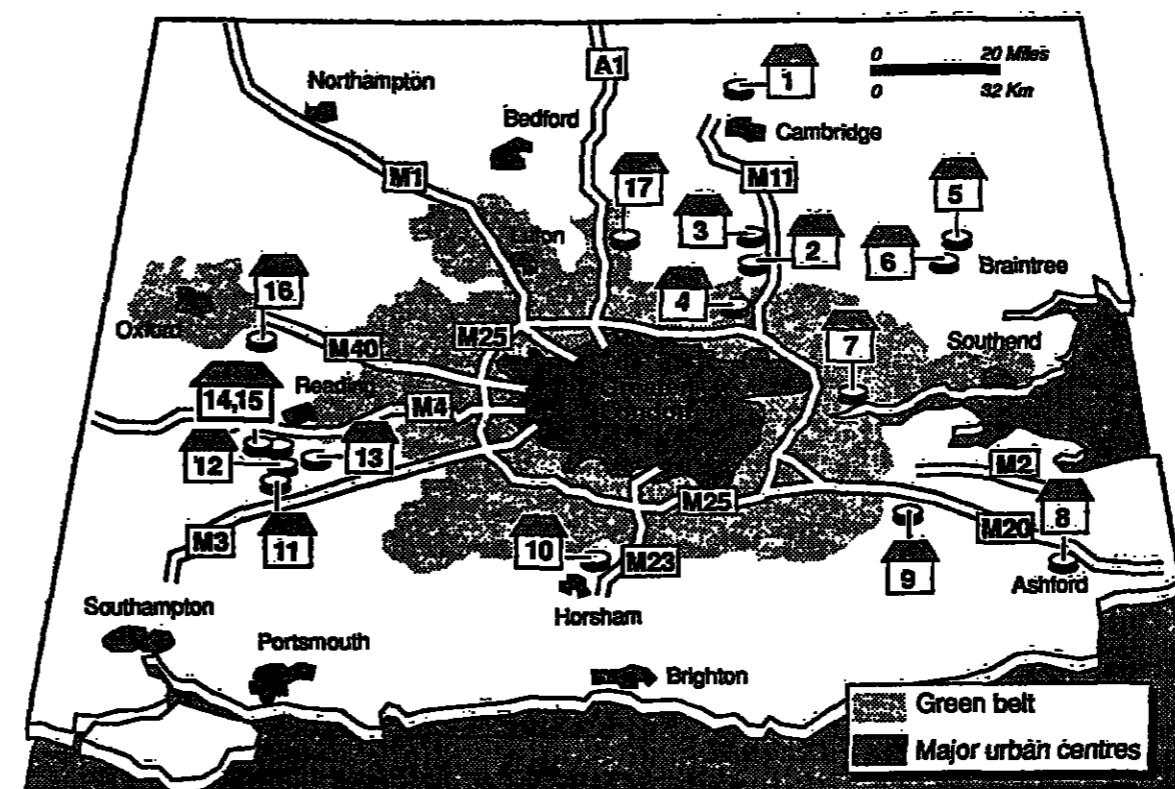
The free market case for looser planning controls is further bolstered by a consideration of the needs of compa-

nies. Traditional regional policies, argues the DfT, were not particularly successful: growth is not easily diverted from prosperous to poor regions. "It would therefore be a mistake" it told the public inquiry into the Hampshire new town application this week, "to interfere with market forces by putting protective barriers around the south-east and other desirable areas in the hope that this would open up opportunities elsewhere". Britain, in other words, must nurture growth and enterprise wherever it happens to thrive.

Conservationists can hardly deny that companies and individuals want to locate themselves in desirable parts of the south east. Consortium Developments will sell at escalating prices, every new house it is allowed to build. Land and house price inflation are clear indicators of the excess demand.

Opponents of faster development must address the issue of excess demand. But they can argue that, on the one hand, the excess demand is artificial – a symptom of inappropriate government policies; on the other, even if it is genuine, it is not in the nation's interests that it be met.

A glance at the Government's tax



The map shows some of the main housing developments proposed by private builders in south-east England. Each of the 17 schemes would provide a minimum of 1,000 homes. Only two developments have received planning permission, one of those after a public inquiry.

Most of the others are likely to be opposed by local councils. Several are the subjects of planning inquiries. Many of the proposals are for new country towns or villages, providing shops, churches, schools, health and leisure facilities.

Starting north-east of London, housing demand along the corridor of the M11 motorway has been stimulated by the decision to expand Stansted as London's third airport, the electrification of the Cambridge railway line and the construction of the M11 and M25 motorways. Plans include: (1) Wilburton, a new town of 3,000 homes proposed by Consortium Developments, which represents nine of Britain's biggest housing builders. There are also more than a dozen schemes to develop another new town close to Cambridge. One plan, from Erosin, is for 3,000 homes at Chittering, north of Cambridge. (2)

Stibford Park Farm – a 1,500-home plan for Bishops Stortford from Bovis and McAlpine Homes; (3) 1,200 homes between Stansted and Bishops Stortford, from Great Homes; (4) Brentford Park – 3,500 homes at Harlow. The last scheme, proposed by a consortium of Countryside Properties, Grouse and Wales, was approved after a public inquiry.

Further west, in Essex: (5) Marks Farm; (6) Countryside has put forward a 1,800-home scheme called White Court West.

At Grays in Essex: (7) Blue Circle, Britain's biggest cement company, and developers Rosehaugh have planning permission to build Chafford Hundred, a new town of 5,000 homes.

Ashford in Kent is another centre attracting strong interest from housing developers. The town will be an important rail head for the Channel Tunnel, due to open in 1993. (8) Ward Holdings has announced plans for a new village to provide 6,000 homes south of Ashford. (9) Close to Leybourne along the M20 in Kent, Ideal Homes proposes a 1,750-home development.

At Wimpey, Bryant and Taylor Woodrow plans to develop 3,700 homes at Maidenhead. The county council also expects planning permission to be sought for 1,500 homes north of Horsham.

At least five big developments have been proposed within the M4/M3 triangle, straddling the borders of Berkshire and Hampshire. These include: (11) 2,000 homes at Hook, put forward by Charles Church; (12) Consortium Developments' plan to build 4,800 homes at Foxley Wood, Bransford, into which a public inquiry opened this week; (13) 1,700 homes at Eversley, by Bryant Homes; (14) Charles Church, Bryant Homes, McAlpine and Rockfield are proposing a 3,000-home project at Spencers Wood; (15) Speyhawk has a scheme for up to 4,000 homes at Great Lee.

East of Oxford close to the M40: (16) Consortium Developments has sought planning permission for a new country town, Stone Bassett, of 5,000 homes. At Stevenage: (17) a consortium of Countryside Properties, Croucher and Wales plans to build 1,600 homes.

Andrew Taylor

tion policies lends support to the artificially thesis. Tax subsidies – mortgage interest relief, no tax on the imputed income from home ownership or on capital gains on the sale of principal residences – have fuelled demand for housing and led many to look on their homes, not as an expense, but as easily their most profitable investment.

Mr Christopher Johnson, the chief economist at Lloyds Bank, points out that nationalised industries and government agencies, for example, still own vast tracts of unused land. "An artificial shortage of land has been created by over-regulation and excessive public ownership," he argues.

Mr Ridley's response to this type of criticism is that a large and growing proportion of development is taking place on urban land: 55 per cent of new houses in London and the south east are built on urban or previously developed land. And the rate at which agricultural land is taken for development has fallen substantially since the 1960s and 1970s. Greater efforts to release previously developed land could doubtless be made: site value taxation could be introduced to penalise companies for not developing excess land.

But even if steps are taken to reduce subsidies for housing and to release more urban land, excess demand for homes in attractive parts of the south-east would remain. Demands, however, as Mr Michael Heseltine, the former Environment Secretary has stressed, do not have to be met simply because they exist. The alternative is to allow prices to rise and ration demand.

Mr Heseltine and others argue that house and land price inflation in the south-east is not such a bad thing. It is a market mechanism which, at long last, is beginning to persuade companies and individuals to consider the

High house prices are persuading companies to consider other parts of the UK

merits of other parts of the UK. On this view, it would be the height of folly to retain planning constraints that when the market is beginning to solve long-standing regional problems.

Dr Michael Hebbert, a member of the geography department at the London School of Economics, points out that the head of steam built up in the south-east property market can be viewed as an indicator of the success of the policy of urban containment. The unsightly ribbon development of the 1960s was stopped in its tracks by the Green Belt and development in the rest of the south east, by and large, has been carefully managed.

The nagging question remains, however: why should people be prevented from living in pleasant rural locations close to London? Why should the lucky owners of period country cottages prevent others sharing their pleasures? After all, it is not as though Londoners get much practical value out of the green belt – their supposed "lung", it like much of the rest of Britain's greenery, consists mainly of inaccessible privately-owned estates rather than rolling parkland for the masses.

Development, in the end, is a moral and aesthetic issue. Does a well-built new village really look worse than a field of yellow rape? asks Professor Evans at Reading. He also backs the new "urban conservationists" and asks why towns should become ever more congested in order to preserve the countryside for the lucky few.

The green lobby's strongest card is undoubtedly the irreversibility of development. Houses can be pulled down and rebuilt. But lost countryside can never be restored. Mr Ridley may win majority support from this generation for looser planning laws, but our grandchildren and great-grandchildren would almost certainly vote against him, if they could.

Michael Prowse

Planning and conservation

A lack of trust in the shires

THE TORY manifesto for last year's general election boasted that Conservatives are by instinct conservationists committed to preserving all that is best in the environment. "We are determined to maintain our national heritage of countryside and architecture," it declared.

Almost a year later Mr Nicholas Ridley, the Environment Secretary, is joined in battle on this issue with an increasingly vocal group of his own backbenchers who do not think that the Government is living up to its manifesto pledges. The 90 Conservative MPs of the Sane Planning group are worried at the increased pressure of new housing on agricultural land, villages and small towns in their constituencies in southern England.

Local conservationist groups and national organisations such as the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) are also at odds with Mr Ridley over what they believe to be the increasing congestion of southern England.

Earlier this week Lord Young, the Trade and Industry Secretary, confirmed the worst fears of the environmental lobby when his department intervened in favour of the proposal by Consortium Developments to build the new Foxley Wood country town of 4,800 homes at Bransford, north-east Hampshire. The submission, personally approved by Lord Young, has caused a political storm as it goes further in favour of new housing and industry than the planning guidance for the south-east issued by Mr Ridley. It emphasises the crucial importance of north-east Hampshire, Berkshire and west Surrey in the growth of indigenous companies and attracting new foreign investment. "For this economic growth to occur the planning system must provide the necessary housing," it says.

This comes when the critics say Mr Ridley has already gone too far in allowing over-development of the region. They believe that the existing planning regulations – or lack of them

– are only partly to blame. Their main complaint is that Mr Ridley, with his strong Thatcherite free-market views, is encouraging overdevelopment by the tone of his speeches and by permitting too many housing schemes to go ahead against local wishes.

The underlying assumption of the planning system is that a development should be permitted unless there is a specific reason against it, such as intrusion into the Green Belt or land of special scientific interest. There is a heavy onus on the objector to prove the case against.

The bedrock of the system was the Town and Country Planning Act of the immediate postwar period which allowed for detailed county development plans. But this was later thought to be too slow and elaborate and it was radically modified by new legislation in 1988 which introduced the concept of structure plans and local structure plans. Under this system the county draws up the overall strategy, including permitted numbers of new homes, and the district councils fill in the details with specific local plans.

But there are complaints that, with many of these plans up for revision, Mr Ridley is intent on overruling the counties in the south-east and forcing them to make provision for more new houses than they want. This is what is now happening in Berkshire, which is seen as a test case. The Sane Planning group, has protested and is watching out for Mr Ridley's final verdict on the case.

In any case Mr Ridley intends to abolish the present system of structure plans on the grounds that it is intensely bureaucratic and continues to make the planning system too slow. He reaffirmed his intention in his controversial recent speech when he delivered an uncompromising counter-blast against the views of the Sane Planning group and a former Tory Environment Secretary, Mr Michael Heseltine. His proposal, which is expected to be announced later in the summer, is to replace structure plans with a system of regional guidance, county policy statements and district local plans.

The conservationists believe this will mean a further watering down of the planning regulations and another invitation to the developers to make contentious planning applications.

The planning framework in which local authorities operate is laid down in a series of advice notes from successive Environment Secretaries. They offer "guidance" to the authorities and developers but, as one local councillor put it, "you ignore them at your peril." Earlier this year Mr Ridley put out a batch of such notes offering regional guidance for the south-east. This consisted of an earlier note from himself and one each from his predecessors Mr Heseltine and Mr Patrick Jenkin. The tone of Mr Ridley's note, which is intended to provide a basis for planning and development for the region for the next 10-15 years, has aroused conservationists' suspicions.

He declares: "At the outset it is necessary to recognise the limitations of the land use planning process. It is the private sector not the planning system that generates economic growth." He goes on to say that soundly based land use plans can help facilitate development and investment and avoid conflict with other policy objectives.

Mr Ridley says it is not the Government's policy to discourage development and economic growth in the south-east in the hope that it will transfer to other areas. He shares the view that economic growth, can act as a force for national economic recovery. He does, however, stress that a significant proportion of new houses should be in urban areas and there should be protection of agricultural land and green belts.

Mr Ridley draws up his proposals after consultation with the London and South East Regional Planning Conference (Sercplan) which consists of 12 county councils, 98 district councils and 33 London boroughs. Sercplan has put forward a scheme for the economic development of the eastern Thames corridor, an area stretching each side of the river from east London to Southend on Sea.

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FT 4/688

CITIZENS of the verdant farm land of rural Berkshire are not normally the stuff of angry campaigns and demonstrations. But so great is the hostility to encroaching housing development among the inhabitants of the small villages of Warfield, Binfield and Winkfield, which lie just north of the booming high-tech town of Bracknell, that they have formed a protest group.

As members of the Northern Parishes Action Group (Norgag), they find themselves unwilling combatants in the battle over development on non-green belt agricultural land in the south-east. In this case it is part of the larger controversy that is raging over the revised Berkshire structure plan, now under consideration by the Government.

If its proposals for increasing the number of new houses in the county goes ahead it would mean that 4,000 of them would be built on the farmland north of Bracknell. At the moment this land, although not part of the green belt, acts as a buffer zone protecting the character of the three parishes.

From Forest Road, which runs along the southern part of the villages, the high-rise towers of Bracknell loom ominously over the field and trees. If development takes place on this land it would fill with new estates of middle-class residences.

People throughout the area, old-time villagers as well as new townies, are furious at the proposals. Travelling by car between Warfield and Binfield I asked a road worker for directions to a new building site. He spluttered with anger and refused to direct me until I could convince him that I was not a developer.

Protesters from Norgag, led by the redoubtable Joanna Strangeways-Booth, staged a protest recently by parking their cars either side of Forest Road. There was soon a long queue of irate motorists, proving her point that the roads are not sufficient to cope with existing traffic, let alone

any increase.

These are not picture-postcard villages of quaint thatched houses. They are more like scattered hamlets. Nevertheless, there is a strong sense of community and the history of settlements in the area dates back to Saxon times.

"We are not selfish," says Mrs Strangeways-Booth. "We are prepared to see controlled development. But we don't see why the developers should have their way all the time. We don't want to become another Middlesex."

The chairman of Norgag is Mr Peter Goodchild, head of BBC Television Drama, who has a period house in Warfield. He maintains that because of the strains on the local infrastructure, the taxpayer will be subsidising the developers. There is also concern at the strains additional population would place on hospitals and schools.

Mr Michael Sergeant, chairman of the Warfield Parish Council, whose family have lived in the village since 1924, fears that the indigenous popula-

Bracknell: a case study Green with anger

LATION will not be able to afford the new houses — many of which would probably sell for between £100,000 and £200,000.

The solid Tory District Council at Bracknell has opposed plans for 4,000 houses but has released proposals for

1,500 new homes which could be spread in a thin line to the north of the town and would not intrude on the countryside.

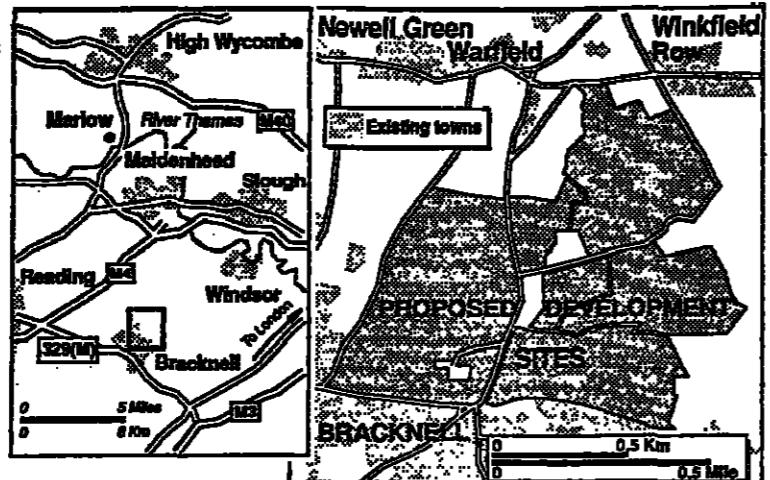
Alan Ward, leader of the council, stands on the top floor of Bracknell's tall council building and points past

the Honeywell Building and the tower block of the 3M company. To the south the area is built up. To the north it is mostly open countryside. If Mr Nicholas Ridley, the Environment Secretary, gives the go-ahead for 4,000 homes then they could only be built in the north.

The planning partnership of Barton Willmore, acting on behalf of a consortium of building companies, has a scheme, now under appeal, for 2,000 houses on 268 acres in this area. It also has an option on another large site of farmland. Mr Gareth Capner, senior partner of Barton Willmore, says that the area is not designated as one of landscape or agricultural value and has been identified by the County Council since 1982 as suitable for major development. He says that the 2,000 development will have a selection of starter homes as well as five bedroom houses.

Meanwhile, rumours abound of huge sums per acre being paid for agricultural land in the area as developers take options on it. Naturally, the farmers are keeping mum about this. It seems that council leader Alan Ward's description of Bracknell as a "new Klondike" could well be applied to the surrounding countryside.

John Hunt



The economics of house building

A spiral fuelled by land

Housing land around

Bedford in Essex, a 25-minute train ride east of London, can cost up to £800,000 an acre (£2m a hectare).

On a development providing 10 houses to the acre, that works out at £80,000 each just for the land.

Add to that building costs of £50,000 per house, £5,000 for roads, sewerage and other services, £10,000 for financing charges and £8,000 for planning, building regulation, legal fees and other overheads.

So it can cost £188,000 just to finance prices and build a four-bedroom house on a 10th of an acre. Include profit, a minimum gross return on capital employed of 25 per cent, and the house might be expected to fetch between £165,000 and £170,000.

Mr Alan Cherry, chairman of Countywide Properties and president of the Housebuilders Federation, says these figures are not typical. They illustrate the pressure on the housing market in south-east England. And the effect is moving outwards as buyers unable to find or afford properties closer to London look further afield.

In Peterborough, for example, housing land prices have risen from £20,000 to £60,000 an acre since 1983, according to Wilson Connolly, the Northamptonshire-based house builder. Since 1983, in Northampton, prices have risen from £100,000 to £500,000 an acre. In Kirby, the jump has been from £30,000 to

£350,000 and in Luton from £300,000 to £500,000.

Land prices account for up to 50 per cent of the cost of building a home, compared with just 10 per cent from the 1950s to the early 1970s, says Mr Mike Robinson, Wilson Connolly's managing director.

Halifax, Britain's biggest building society, says the average price of a house in Britain is £55,247, more than four times the average national wage of £13,278. The last time the ratio was this high was in the early 1970s, after which house prices fell sharply in real terms.

But the present relationship between prices and wages masks disparities between the regions and between existing owners and first-time buyers. A first-time buyer in northern England, for example, might expect to pay just under 3½ times national average earnings to buy an average-priced house.

Many of his counterparts in the south east have been priced out of the market.

To put the statistics into perspective, a married couple in Northampton buying a home for the first time would need savings of, say, £12,000 and £6,000 to qualify for a building society mortgage of £40,000. This would buy them no more than an old two-bedroom terrace house, says Mike Robinson of Wilson Connolly.

Regions like East Anglia are now overtaking London and the south-east in setting the pace of price increases. Prices in East Anglia, according to Halifax, rose by 40 per cent in the last

months to the end of April.

As demand for credit has soared, some mortgage brokers have been offering couple loans of up to 3½ times combined salaries. Some buyers are taking on more debt than they can afford, fueling fears that mortgage lending is leaving up inflationary pressures on the rest of the economy.

First-time buyers now raise almost 90 per cent of the purchase price of their house from mortgage loans. Some risk being wiped out if interest rates rise.

But builders stress that high house prices have not been brought about by ready availability of credit. Rather, high demand for credit is a response to the sharp growth in house prices. They say the only way to control prices is to bring the supply of homes into line with demand. That means releasing more land for development.

The housing schemes that are permitted are very profitable. Countrywide, which builds exclusively in the south east, nearly trebled its pre-tax profit from £4.1m to £11.1m in the year to September 30, and the average price of its homes increased from £24,000 to £29,000.

Over the last 18 months many large and medium-size builders have reported record profits. This year looks like being another good one, with private sector housing starts at their highest level since 1973 during the first three months of the year.

Andrew Taylor

After two years at the Treasury,

the Honeywell Building and the tower block of the 3M company. To the south the area is built up. To the north it is mostly open countryside. If Mr Nicholas Ridley, the Environment Secretary, gives the go-ahead for 4,000 homes then they could only be built in the north.

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Pensions under attack

From Mr R.A. Hewitt

Sir, I am pleased to see you remind us (Leader, June 1) about the important deficiency of occupational pension schemes: that is, that the employee has no property rights over the value of benefits accumulated in his or her own name.

In addition to the direct result of hostile takeover bids, the current economic climate has inevitably led to most companies pruning costs to the minimum.

I work for a medium sized insurance business (2,700 employees) where the personnel director is now openly saying that no job is permanent. This has been

shown in recent redundancies among junior serving middle management. For example, although the normal retirement age is 60, a 55-year-old was fired two months ago after more than 17 years immediate past service with the company and about 30 years total service. While this employee will still receive a pension, he will suffer a considerable reduction in benefit by leaving early; a reduction out of all proportion to his loss of just four years service.

I believe only a very small proportion of employees in final salary schemes will ever receive a pension at the level of the apparent promises made by such schemes. Most lose out.

Thank you for re-opening the public debate on this vexed subject.

R.A. Hewitt,
111 Tantallon,
Birley,
County Durham

Letters to the Editor

An opting out scheme will downgrade the NHS

From Mr J.R. CATCH

Sir, A "hypothecated" health tax suggests others, such as an education tax, "opting-out" of such taxes, will mean that the largest *per capita* contributions will be lost to the national service, which will have a lower *per capita* income and therefore a downgraded service. The present element of redistribution of

wealth will be reduced.

The standard of the national service could indeed be restored by putting up the health tax. That would increase the tax benefit to those opting out; a formula for inflating the costs of health care all round, to the benefit of no one but the insurance industry.

We are invited to have recourse to charities and lotteries.

From Mr Matthew Ryan.
Sir, David Green (Letters, May 24) argues that there is a "serious structural flaw" in the national health service (NHS) which leads to health rationing and, therefore, to public dissatisfaction. However, he fails to appreciate the creative dynamic inherent in this dissatisfaction: it means that there is constant pressure for improvement. Dissatisfaction with current knowledge is the motivation for scientific research — as dissatisfaction with the road system is a stimulus for improving it. As for health rationing, it should be pointed out that the amount of insurance dependency on the army and police for our security, and that it would be more "grown-up" to be able to protect oneself with a private militia. The truth is that security and health are two areas where the collective solution is the most practical one.

Finally, Dr Green suggests that the NHS could be left intact even if those on private health schemes could opt out of subsidising it. But those paying the most tax would be the ones to opt out. This would cause cuts on an unprecedented scale.

Matthew Ryan,
6 Birnam Road, N4

be for employees to submit a copy of their last P60 certificate on personal pension certification (May 23) for Inland Revenue purposes highlights the unnecessary complexity with which these matters are being handled.

Surely a simple solution would

be for employees to submit a copy of their last P60 certificate on personal pension application.

This gives the most recent tax record information as at the end of the latest tax year. Only employees who have not worked in the previous tax year,

or just started employment for the first time, would fall outside this simple self certification.

Anthony Reed,
Sparrow & Partners,
78 Woodbridge Road,
Guildford, Surrey

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is required to do this. This gives the most recent tax record information as at the end of the latest tax year. Only employees who have not worked in the previous tax year, or just started employment for the first time, would fall outside this simple self certification.

Finally, good quality research

is required, but this is now available at a reasonable cost. By taking this route, we have been able to keep overheads low and, as a result, our standard commission rates are below the old fixed rates. There are no plans to introduce investment management fees. I am sure that we are not alone.

This leaves them two choices: introduce fees or sell the department.

The demand for "discount" broking has been met by the banks and British Telecom, so that a stockbroking firm wishing to remain in the private client field must offer a personal investment service, otherwise it

becomes just another fund management group. Part of this service is advising on suitable investments or managing portfolios at discretion — but it is as important to help clients avoid unwise actions. In my view, charging for ancillary services (such as nominees) is justifiable, but stockbrokers may be making a serious mistake if management fees are introduced in these market conditions; clients may be unwilling to pay when portfolio values have fallen.

With discretionary management, the temptation has always been to group together smaller clients with similar requirements and block trade; the Financial Services Act is law, some larger groups seem to be finding that the problems of complying with the legislation, combined with the low level of business, have made their traditional private client departments at best marginally profitable, while taking up management time.

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UK COMPANY NEWS

BAT gets green light from Arizona in Farmers bid

By NICK BUNKER

THE STATE of Arizona has given BAT Industries the green light to go ahead with its \$4.5bn (£2.5bn) takeover bid for Farmers Group, the US insurer, in a breakthrough which marks a big breakthrough for the British tobacco-based multinationals in its long struggle to acquire the company.

Officials at the state's insurance department in Phoenix issued a 14-page ruling approving BAT as a future owner of Farmers at 10 am local time yesterday.

They said Farmers could appeal the decision to the Arizona Superior Court, but Farmers Group officials declined to comment immediately on whether the company would do so.

Arizona is the first state to announce the results of regulatory hearings into BAT's takeover plan. Another eight states have yet to reach a decision about whether BAT can acquire the US group. The key decision, by regulators in California, is due to be published in about three weeks.

About 5 per cent of Farmers' Group's premiums come from Arizona, making it the group's third largest source of business after California and Texas.

BAT warmly welcomed the news of the ruling last night, and said that the laws governing insurance takeovers were "substantially similar" in the other states. "We are confident that

BAT can satisfy the requirements in the other states as well", BAT said.

Mr Tom Welch, a spokesman for Farmers at its Los Angeles head office, said the group was unable to comment in detail until it had seen the text of the ruling.

But he said that Farmers would probably apply for a re-hearing of the Arizona decision. Under local procedures the group has 30 days in which to file such an application.

Farmers has been mounting stiff resistance to the bid from BAT, largely via arguments in regulatory hearings that as a tobacco company with South African interests BAT is unfit to control it.

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stiff resistance to the bid from BAT, largely via arguments in regulatory hearings that as a tobacco company with South African interests BAT is unfit to control it.

Henderson Admin falls to £22m

By CLARE PEARSON

HENDERSON Administration, the fund management group, suffered a 15 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £22.46m in the year to the end of March as business dropped in the aftermath of the stock market crash.

The lower value of funds managed, net redemptions of unit trusts, and diminished trading volume, meant Henderson made less than half the profits in the second half than in the first. The interim figure was £51.6m.

Funds under management rose to £7.61bn, an eight per cent increase. But the increase came from lower-margin pension fund business while the unit trust side shrank from £2bn to £1.6bn. Funds in the pension fund side increased from £1.4bn to £4.5bn.

Mr Ben Wrey, deputy chairman, said the group had attempted to cope with the fall-off in activity since last October by cutting costs, although the effects had not been as marked as had been hoped.

However, the higher operating profit of £39.86m (£24.55m)

included non-recurring expenses associated with moving to a new building in Finchley Avenue in the City. One floor of this has been sub-let, and the company is hoping to sub-let another.

Henderson has cut back on marketing expenditure and renegotiated some fee structures. Last November, 104 staff were made redundant, although only 24 of these were permanent.

The operating profit came at £51.53m (£51.72m) after revenues of £55.2m (£46.31m). Interest receivable increased to £7.57m (£5m).

After interest payable of £75.000 (£29.000) and tax of £8.78m (£9.75m) earnings per share came at £4.06p (£4.55p) after transfer to initial charges equalisation reserve. There is a final 20p dividend which together with the interim of 7p makes an eight per cent increase over 1986-87.

● **comment**
With only about half as many people choosing to buy unit

trusts this spring as last, and professional stock market activity at a low ebb, there was not much you could do to boost profits with an independent fund manager with a high proportion of fixed costs; at least these figures were no worse than expected. This year, the Financial Services Act will compound problems by eating into profits in two ways: the running cost of compliance alone will come out at about £400,000 this year, Mr Wrey estimates, while at the same time new rules mean unit trust trading profits will be curbed. Some of this can be offset by putting up fees: new pension fund clients, who get their services on the cheap by international standards, are already paying more, as are holders of three of the unit trusts.

What the next twelve months hold depends largely on what you think about the market, but Henderson at least has an excellent track record in attracting new business. Analysts' forecasts are in a broad range of between £16m and £21m pre-tax.

Mr Cramer is the head of Barlow Clowes Gilt Managers, the £50m investment company where a provisional liquidator was appointed at the request of the Securities and Investments Board a week ago. He is also chief executive of its quoted parent, James Ferguson Holdings.

Mr Clowes said yesterday

that he had been advised that it might be difficult to get the provisional liquidation order lifted, and that a "white knight" solution was being examined first. He was talking to three interested parties, he said, over the possible sale of BCGM and/or Barlow Clowes International.

Mr Cramer's announcement

follows a statement earlier this week that Mr Clowes was resigning from a similar non-executive post at Buckley's Brewery. Buckley's is a small Welsh brewer where the two men acquired a majority stake, following a £2.2m cash offer, just ahead of the England investment. Mr Clowes also announced that he was putting his 40.4 per cent stake in Buckley's up for sale.

One suggestion is that Mr Clowes might acquire Mr Cramer's holding in England as part-payment for a reverse transaction in respect of the Buckley's stake. However, in order to avoid a mandatory bid by Mr Cramer for Buckley's - he already owns an 18 per cent interest in the company - a large part of the Clowes stake would have to be placed out.

In 1988 all companies have traded better than last year, the directors reported. Sales rose over 10 per cent while the number employed was reduced from 430 to 374 at end-April.

Actions initiated in the second half of 1987 have substantially cut into overheads resulting in an increase in net profit margin and net profit per capita.

There was an extraordinary credit of £49,000 (£2.6m) reflecting the final tranche of the surplus from the pension fund, net of costs principally associated with the withdrawal from certain manufacturing activities.

Mr Beazer paid 180p per share and now owns 4.5m shares - 1.63 per cent of Beazer's equity.

Mr Beazer's holding in Beazer

another 1m shares

Mr Brian Beazer, chairman and chief executive of Beazer, the housebuilding and construction group, has acquired a further 1m shares in the company.

The purchase was made on Thursday, the day after Beazer clinched victory in its long-running £1.75m bid for Koppers, the US aggregates and chemicals group.

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FT - ACTUARIES WORLD INDICES

Jointly compiled by the Financial Times, Goldman, Sachs & Co., and Wood Mackenzie & Co. Ltd., in conjunction with the Institute of Actuaries and the Faculty of Actuaries

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MARKETS	THURSDAY JUNE 2 1988				WEDNESDAY JUNE 1 1988				DOLLAR INDEX		
	US Dollar Index	Day's Change %	Pound Sterling Index	Local Currency Index	US Dollar Index	Pound Sterling Index	Local Currency Index	1988 High	1988 Low	Year ago (approx)	
Australia (180)	141.88	-2.7	116.86	117.67	3.78	145.74	118.46	119.67	145.74	91.16	133.26
Austria (112)	87.80	-0.1	72.31	78.77	2.60	87.91	71.45	78.77	98.18	84.35	87.57
Belgium (63)	120.92	+0.1	99.60	108.40	4.64	120.79	98.18	107.98	139.89	99.14	114.41
Canada (25)	120.92	+0.5	99.52	107.97	3.13	120.16	97.67	107.29	125.49	107.18	128.69
Denmark (39)	128.12	+0.2	100.10	110.21	2.29	129.01	105.23	110.21	130.41	105.23	117.61
Finland (25)	132.92	-0.9	109.48	114.96	1.83	131.01	110.01	114.98	134.12	106.78	125.00
France (126)	95.89	-0.6	78.32	87.03	3.72	95.57	77.76	87.41	95.67	72.77	109.53
West Germany (99)	76.64	+0.0	63.13	68.71	2.70	76.42	62.28	68.71	80.79	67.78	91.08
Hong Kong (46)	101.74	+1.5	83.80	102.07	4.03	100.26	81.49	105.83	84.90	115.72	105.83
Iceland (1)	123.90	-0.1	110.21	121.87	3.89	123.92	108.85	121.70	124.60	104.60	127.24
Italy (102)	111.11	+1.9	58.57	68.14	2.94	116.76	56.70	81.74	124.23	104.23	98.58
Japan (456)	139.54	-0.4	114.84	122.22	2.60	139.97	111.96	128.95	141.20	111.96	134.25
Malaysia (36)	157.71	-0.9	128.90	134.69	1.61	152.43	126.45	134.99	174.90	90.07	202.32
Mexico (14)	104.27	-0.1	85.88	92.16	5.02	104.39	84.85	92.16	110.66	95.23	115.73
Netherlands (58)	81.43	-0.2	67.23	62.51	5.80	81.78	66.49	62.16	81.78	64.42	93.54
New Zealand (23)	120.62	+0.4	99.35	103.43	2.92	120.10	97.62	102.21	132.23	98.55	139.96
Singapore (22)	105.76	+1.3	95.51	108.02	2.32	114.43	93.01	106.52	115.96	97.99	142.90
South Africa (64)	123.30	-0.1	107.63	94.52	5.05	120.65	102.23	107.63	124.64	102.23	135.75
Seals (42)	125.82	-0.1	121.15	124.15	1.25	125.82	117.53	125.82	125.82	117.53	125.82
Sweden (36)	123.97	-1.2	102.11	110.89	2.54	125.26	102.01	111.52	125.50	95.92	132.38
Switzerland (55)	78.87	-0.7	64.96	70.24	2.43	78.30	63.65	86.75	75.60	93.18	93.18
United Kingdom (327)	135.25	-1.1	111.43	111.43	4.35	136.82	111.21	111.21	141.18	123.05	144.94
USA (57)	106.05	-0.5	89.00	108.61	3.62	108.61	99.19	108.61	110.51	108.61	120.78
The World Index (246)	128.47	-0.4	105.82	113.64	2.34	129.04	104.89	113.46	130.92	113.37	131.64

Base value: Dec. 31, 1986 = 100. Previous Dec. 31, 1987 = 115.037 (US \$ index), 90.791 (Pound Sterling) and 94.94 (Local).

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Markets closed June 2: Austria, West Germany and Spain.

Latest prices were unavailable for this edition.

TRADING VOLUME IN MAJOR STOCKS

Stock	Volume 000's	Stock	Volume 000's	Stock	Volume 000's
ASDA Group	7,900	General Accident	157	Prudential	8,000
ARM Group	3,700	General Elect.	8,000	RBS	4,400
Argent Corp.	1,000	Globe & Mail	522	RMC	2,400
Argyll Group	744	Globe Investment	1,000	Rothmans & Colman	1,800
Brit. Foods	1,200	ICI	215	Ruston Ind.	1,000
BMA	3,200	Imperial Met.	1,000	Ryder	1,000
BAT	4,300	JG	215	Ryley	1,000
BBC	104	Kelvin N.E.	1,000	Rothmans	1,000
BHC	2,100	Kelvin S.E.	1,000	Rutter	1,000
BODC	2,100	Kelvin S.W.	1,000	Rutter	1,000
BTR	2,652	Kennedy	758	RTZ	2,400
Burdex	2,100	Kestrel	1,000	Rutter	1,000
Bass	2,100	Kidder Peck	1,000	Rutter	1,000
Beecham	3,200	Hillhouse Holdings	879	Royal Bank Scotland	1,000
Blue Arrow	3,600	Hillhouse Inv.	1,000	Ryley	1,000
Blue Circle	297	Hiscox	1,000	Ryley	1,000
Booths	2,200	Hiscox	1,000	Ryley	1,000
Br. Airways	1,100	Hiscox	1,000	Ryley	1,000
Br. Aerospace	1,100	Hiscox	1,000	Ryley	1,000
British Gas	2,500	Hiscox	1,000	Ryley	1,000
BP	2,709	Lloyd's Bank	1,000	Ryley	1,000
BP Telecomm.	6,011	Lloyd's Bank	1,000	Ryley	1,000
Burnton Oil	2,000	Loyd's Bank	1,000	Ryley	1,000
Cable & Wireless	2,000	Loyd's Bank	1,000	Ryley	1,000
Castrol Schaeffler	7,400	Marlboro	3,700	Ryley	1,000
Coast Vigtela	384	Marwell Comm.	389	Ryley	1,000
Com. Union	1,100	Met. Elekt.	2,100	Ryley	1,000
Cookson	334	Midland Bank	2,100	Ryley	1,000
Courtaulds	1,000	Midwest Bank	2,100	Ryley	1,000
Daimler-Benz	2,000	North Western	2,100	Ryley	1,000
Dee Corporation	623	Peacock	532	Ryley	1,000
Diageo	456	Petrol. Group	1,000	Ryley	1,000
Enterprise Oil	2,600	Pilkington	1,000	Ryley	1,000
FBI Sabco	2,000	Plessey	5,000	Ryley	1,000
Fisons	523	Watlow	1,000	Ryley	1,000
TOTAL VOLUME IN CONTRACTS : 34,152.					
A-Acc	10	B-BM	10	C-Call	10
D-Put	10	E-Euro	10	F-Put	10

BASE LENDING RATES

	1st 88	2nd 88	3rd 88
ABN C	1.00	1.10	1.10
ASB C	2.10	2.50	2.50
AEGON C	0.82	1.20	1.20
AMICO C	2.50	2.50	2.50
AOHOLD C	0.70	1.20	1.20
AKZO C	1.10	1.10	1.10
AMCO C	0.55	0.55	0.55
AMEV C	0.55	0.55	0.55
AMICO C	0.55	0.55	0.55
AMRO P	0.55	0.55	0.55
BURHIMANN-TC	1.20	1.20	1.20
BUSSING C	0.55	0.55	0.55
ELSEVIER C	0.55	0.55	0.55
ELSEVIER P	0.55	0.55	0.55
ESTERSON C	0.55	0.55	0.55
HEWICKEN C	0.55	0.55	0.55
HODGEVENS C	0.55	0.55	0.55
KLM C	0.55	0.55	0.55
KNP C	0.55	0.55	0.55
KPN C	0.55	0.55	0.55
LEEDLOVTO C	0.55	0.55	0.55
ROYAL			

INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND FINANCE

Icahn says banks will lend \$8.86bn for Texaco bid

BY JAMES BUCHAN IN NEW YORK

MR CARL ICAHN, the Wall Street investor who is seeking to launch a \$14.22bn offer for Texaco said yesterday he could easily finance his unprecedented takeover bid by borrowing from banks and selling off valuable assets from the oil company.

In a lengthy presentation to Texaco's institutional stockholders and Wall Street analysts yesterday, Mr Icahn said he had faith in raising the \$8.86bn in finance as he will need for his bid to start.

"We've had talks with banks and we see no problems at all about borrowing the \$8.86bn," Mr Icahn said after the meeting at a Manhattan hotel on Thursday night.

But Texaco yesterday said the financing plan was "sketchy, sloppy - and wrong." It said Mr Icahn would really have to raise more than \$20bn to complete the takeover.

Mr Icahn, who owns Trans World Airlines and is a leading stockholder in the USX steel and energy group as well as Texaco, rejected a demand that he produce an opinion from an investment bank that he can finance what would be the largest take-over bid in history.

"I have more capital than most of these investment bankers," he said. He has also promised to forfeit \$100m if he cannot raise the money.

Mr Icahn also warned the assembled stockholders that he

would drop his offer and sell his 14.8 per cent stake in Texaco at below market prices if they failed to support his proxy fight with the company's management.

He said state takeover regulations prevented him raising the money for the takeover bid unless Texaco's management, which has dismissed his offer, agreed to put the proposal to stockholders.

Mr Icahn has launched his proxy fight to seat five directors on Texaco's board at the June 17 annual meeting and force the company to present the offer to share holder vote.

In a bravura performance before 500 Wall Street fund managers, analysts and arbitrageurs, Mr Icahn said it would cost \$14.22bn to buy the shares he does not own and settle various Texaco obligations. He said he would raise \$5.36bn of the necessary funds through the after-tax proceeds of selling Texaco Canada and Carter, Texaco's Asian joint venture with Chevron.

The remaining \$3.86bn could be easily financed, at a 12 per cent interest rate, from Texaco's annual cash-flow, which he estimated at \$2.99bn after the sale of the two companies. He said his interest cost would be only \$700m a year after tax, which would leave over \$2bn a year for oil exploration, capital expenditures and repayment of principal.

"I'm not looking to liquidate Texaco but to keep it a strong core oil company," he said.

Bow pays less for Ocelot

BY DAVID OWEN IN TORONTO

BOW VALLEY INDUSTRIES, the Canadian oil and gas group in which British Gas holds a 51 per cent equity interest, is to pay 12 per cent less than originally announced for an Ocelot subsidiary which owns substantial natural gas reserves in south-west Saskatchewan.

Bow Valley will now pay C\$342m (US\$277m) in cash for the assets, which include 475bn cu ft of proven natural gas reserves. The preliminary purchase price agreed was C\$344m.

According to Mr Brooke Wade, Ocelot's president, the adjustment was due to evolving perceptions of the physical attributes of the property.

• Robert Gibbons writes from Montreal: The Canadian arm of Ultramar in the UK moved firmly into the black in 1987, with earnings of C\$47m, compared with a loss of C\$13m in 1986. Revenues were \$1.5bn last year and return on average capital employed 13.4 per cent, up from 5.5 per cent in 1986.

level and the highest for nine and a half months.

Platinum ended the week at \$606.50 an ounce, up \$30 over the week, even though Japanese investors are now said to be selling the metal.

Yesterday it was the turn of gold and silver.

Gold reached a four-month peak of \$465 a troy ounce while silver soared to a six-month high of \$37.35 cents before the prices eased back slightly to \$464.50 and \$37.33.

Mr Graham Birch, an analyst at Kleinwort Grieveson Securities, said silver had been the first metal to take off and had dragged gold along.

China told to issue shares to foreigners

By Robert Thomson in Peking

A SENIOR Chinese economic official has tested the limits of the Communist Party's reform programme by urging companies to issue shares to foreigners in order to raise needed

foreigners. Share issues for Chinese remain a subject of contention between the "shares" the Government claims have been issued by 6,000 factories are generally no more than bonds, entitling investors to interest but providing no ownership rights.

However, Sun Peihua, a provincial manager of the People's Bank of China, the central bank, said that issuing shares to foreigners is a "sure way for Chinese enterprises to raise needed capital for development."

Mr Sun, based in Shenyang, a northern city experimenting with financial instruments, said in the official press that such share issues would be particularly useful in funding the overhaul of outdated enterprises and claimed that a proposed issue by the state-run Shenyang Motor Vehicle Corporation has already attracted foreign interest.

A Chinese newspaper, the Financial Times, itself partly owned by the People's Bank (and unrelated to this newspaper), has promised to publish a prospectus of sorts for the vehicle corporation.

While the Communist Party likes the idea of shares as a means of raising capital, the concept of shareholder ownership has been difficult to digest ideologically, and the vast majority of share-cum-bond issues have been restricted to workers in the factory concerned.

Party reformers have sought to expand the share issues, and the Economic Daily recently asserted that "shares are a product of an advanced commodity economy - capitalism cannot do without them, and socialism can also make use of them." The key words are commodity economy, as the party claims to be developing a "socialist commodity economy."

The institute forecasts that pre-tax profit growth of 444 leading quoted companies, excluding banks and non-life insurance companies, will average 7.7 per cent in the fiscal year to March 1989, compared with 19.2 per cent.

None the less, if this comes about, the profit level would be a new record, exceeding the previous one set in the year to March 1985. On an index of 100 in 1974, the 1984-5 average profit level of leading companies was 201.2. This year's forecast is 215.7.

On the other hand, non-manufacturing industries' profits could fall 8.4 per cent after a drop of 5.1 per cent last year, mainly because of a margin squeeze on the electric power and gas companies.

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WEEKEND FT

Weekend June 4/June 5 1988

• MARKETS • FINANCE & THE FAMILY • PROPERTY • TRAVEL • MOTORING • DIVERSIONS • HOW TO SPEND IT • BOOKS • ARTS • TV •

THE GREAT Wall Street Crash of 1929 caused hardship to millions. But it also sparked a handful of entrepreneurs into new ventures which not only rescued their finances but changed the society in which they lived. Among his ardent band of modern followers, few realise that one such was Ettore Bugatti, the legendary sports and racing car designer. Had the post-crash slump not devastated his order book - far more brutally than Porsche has suffered since last October's Black Monday - he would never have been forced into a business that revolutionised rail travel in 1930s France and foreshadowed today's "Trains à Grand Vitesse".

Nor is it realised generally that, without Bugatti, Britain might never have seen its most stylish high-speed steam railway locomotives, the A4 class of streamliners. Their sleek lines have featured in many a public exhibition of 1930s art, and their few preserved examples have become cult objects on a par with Bugatti's famous blue cars. One of these engines, the *Mallard*, still holds the world steam speed record of 126mph which it broke 50 years ago this summer a few miles south of the Lincolnshire market town of Grantham, where Margaret Thatcher was still a schoolgirl. The anniversary of this feat will be celebrated on the very day, July 3, by a commemorative run.

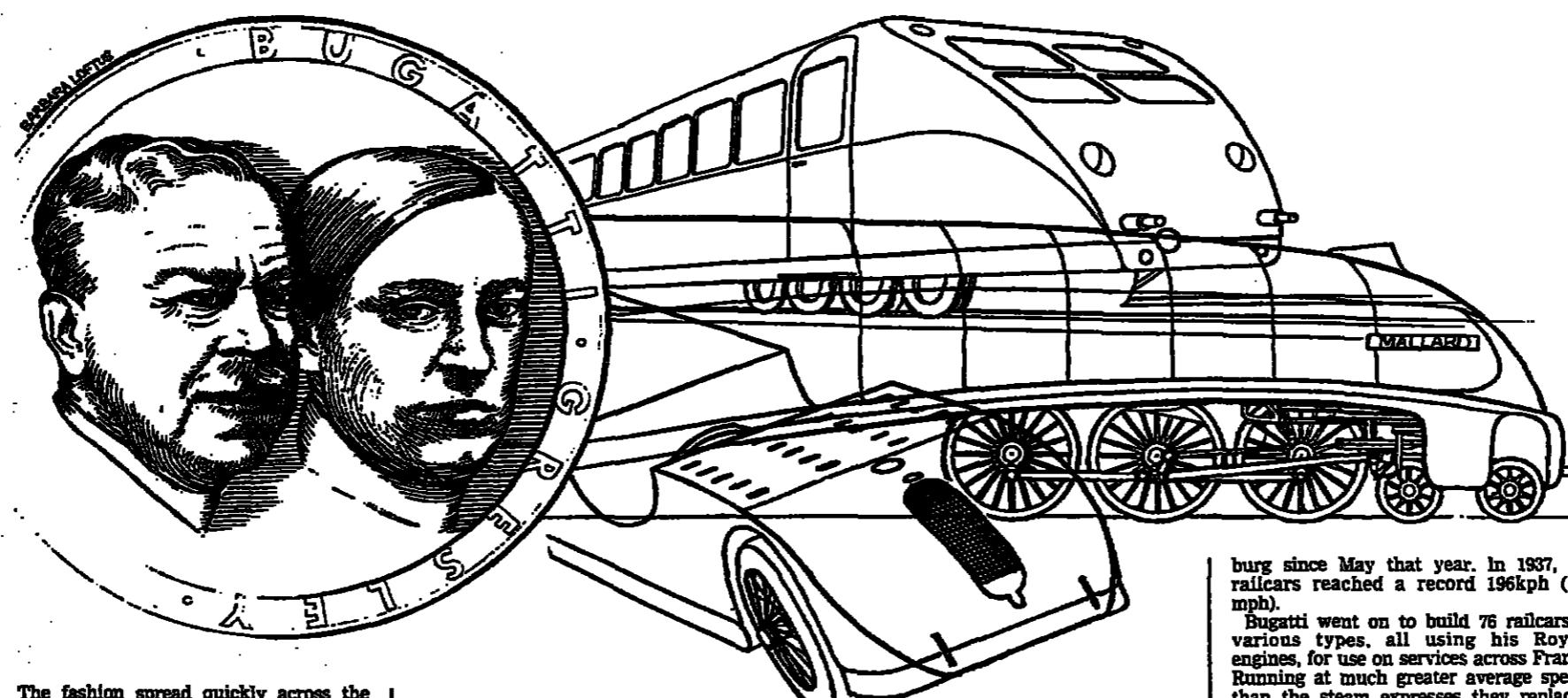
The story of Bugatti's revival from his troubles and his subsequent influence over the Mallard's designer, Sir Nigel Gresley, has never been told properly. Car and railway enthusiasts on both sides of the Channel are such separate breeds, and mostly so insular, that the Bugatti-Gresley connection receives scant mention in most of the plethora of history books.

Certainly, the two men were very different. Bugatti, the largely self-trained son of Italian furniture designer Carlo Bugatti, had a florid personality and sartorial tastes to match: he often sported a bowler hat to work at his factory in Alsace, north-east France, and also had a penchant for wearing riding breeches and yellow sweaters when out on business. The redoubtable Gresley, a formally-trained engineer whose father was an English chimney sweep, was a man of strict discipline. He was a gruff pedant with a bushy moustache and a taste for restrained suits. As chief mechanical engineer of the London and North-Eastern Railway Company (LNER), he epitomised strict Englishness.

Yet, Bugatti and Gresley had plenty in common. From their very different positions as owner and senior employee, they were both strong powers of the respective establishments. They shared not only a strong inventiveness and an interest in new ideas from abroad, but also an unusual eye for aesthetics. The latter was just as well, for they were working in a world about to wake up to the commercial attractions of "streamlining" - what we know today as industrial design.

The great economic slump of the early 1930s gave an enormous boost to the budding design profession as American, and then European, industry began to understand the way that a smoothly-styled exterior could give a much-needed lift to the sales of a mundane product. As the fashion for the speed-associated images of "streamlining" caught on like wildfire from 1933, American industry began to employ art-trained "industrial designers" such as Raymond Loewy and Henry Dreyfuss to apply the style to cars, trains, ocean liners and anything else that moved. Even static objects were not immune: food mixers, vacuum cleaners and cigarette lighters all sprouted "aerodynamic" shapes with horizontal "stream lines" on their sides.

Bugatti's railway revolution



The fashion spread quickly across the Atlantic but the presence of such heavyweight design polymaths as Bugatti and Gresley spared Europe from its excesses: they were wide open to the commercial attractions of better public relations but they rooted their streamlining in functional considerations, not just in form.

To Bugatti, the key thing about streamlined racing cars was not just that they looked good but that the reduced air resistance made them go faster. Working partly by eye, partly by trial and error, he was experimenting constantly with aerodynamics to squeeze yet more speed out of his cars. Gresley's main interest in streamlining was similar: to get his trains from London to the north faster than competing railway companies while lifting smoke and steam away from the drivers' line of vision, a problem which plagued every designer of express steam locomotives.

But Bugatti and Gresley had plenty in common. From their very different positions as owner and senior employee, they were both strong powers of the respective establishments. They shared not only a strong inventiveness and an interest in new ideas from abroad, but also an unusual eye for aesthetics. The latter was just as well, for they were working in a world about to wake up to the commercial attractions of "streamlining" - what we know today as industrial design.

The great economic slump of the early 1930s gave an enormous boost to the budding design profession as American, and then European, industry began to understand the way that a smoothly-styled exterior could give a much-needed lift to the sales of a mundane product. As the fashion for the speed-associated images of "streamlining" caught on like wildfire from 1933, American industry began to employ art-trained "industrial designers" such as Raymond Loewy and Henry Dreyfuss to apply the style to cars, trains, ocean liners and anything else that moved. Even static objects were not immune: food mixers, vacuum cleaners and cigarette lighters all sprouted "aerodynamic" shapes with horizontal "stream lines" on their sides.

1928 he had launched his "car of kings," the monster Royale - a 15ft, three-ton, ultra-luxury grand tourer costing much more than a Rolls-Royce. But the Wall Street crash hit demand so hard that by 1932 he had sold only three of them - none to a king. Eventually, just three more were built (one of which was auctioned in London's Albert Hall last autumn for the very regal sum of £5.5m).

Bugatti had banked so heavily on the vehicle that his 1,200-person factory in the small town of Molsheim was left with a desperate shortage of work. Finances were strained still further by his having laid down, at great cost, 25 of the giant 200-

and other manufacturers in the hard-hit motor industry, Bugatti had landed a lucrative contract. Laid low with "Ilu" for much of the following winter, he is said to have worked long hours in his bedroom on detailed sketches for every aspect of his railcar design, huddled for warmth sometimes in his dressing gown, sometimes in his bathrobe. To the outsider, the vehicle's most obvious characteristic was its curved, wedge-shaped front and rear, based on the *Tours Tank* but with the vital difference that the railcar was long and heavy enough to avoid the racing car's instability. To Bugatti, though, the high-performance motors inside were just

Christopher Lorenz explains how the legendary car designer turned to trains and put Britain on the right track

horsepower engines he had designed specially for the Royale. Although Bugatti was forced to cut his staff by almost half between 1932 and 1934, his enterprise was saved from a painful end by the intervention of fate.

France's railways, then still divided into separate companies, had suffered badly from the combined effect of the slump and the growth of competition from cars plus, on longer journeys, aircraft. The result, starting in 1932, was a rush programme to develop high-speed rail transport. Long-standing safety limits on the speed of steam trains shifted most of the attention to petrol and diesel railcars.

By late that year, like Renault, Michelin

as vital: he used the very petro engines, laid four in line, that he had designed and built for the Royale.

So urgent was Bugatti's situation that the Molsheim factory built the prototype by the following spring, even before there had been time to lay a siding to the local station. Half the small town turned out to see the oddly-shaped vehicle being manoeuvred laboriously along the road instead. By the summer of 1933, Bugatti railcars were in full service between Paris and Deauville, having reached 120 kph (112 mph) during their trials. This was faster than the equivalent train in Germany, the diesel-powered Flying Hamburger which had been plying between Berlin and Ham-

burg since May that year. In 1937, the railcars reached a record 196kph (122 mph).

Bugatti went on to build 76 railcars of various types, all using his Royale engines, for use on services across France. Running at much greater average speeds than the steam expresses they replaced, they were operated successfully - if humbly - by several railway companies until the war. Their voracious fuel consumption of less than a kilometre per litre meant that their life was cut short in the austere years of the late-1940s and early Fifties. However, their sleek aerodynamics had helped to spawn a far more efficient type of high-speed rail locomotion across the Channel: Gresley's A4 steam engines.

By the early 1930s, the same competition from cars and aircraft that had sparked the development of Bugatti's railcars was hitting railway companies all over the world. In the United States, the growth of long-distance bus travel was an added challenge. The reaction was universal: accelerate existing schedules to attract the public back onto the rails. In almost every case, this meant ordering entirely new locomotives and coaches and streamlining them - either for publicity purposes, as in the US, or for a more balanced mixture of promotional and functional reasons, as in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and (eventually) Britain.

Gresley (he was knighted in 1936) had been experimenting with various forms of partial streamlining since 1929, partly for reasons of speed but initially to overcome the constant problem of smoke and steam obscuring drivers' vision. His experiments threw him quickly into a fierce debate that was developing among his international peers about the precise function of streamlining and its ideal form.

On one side were ranked the supporters of a horizontal wedge on the Bugatti principle, which lifted the air over the top of the vehicle. On the other, with a pedigree going back to experiments in the 1880s, were US, German and other advocates of a vertical type of wedge which pushed much of the air along each side of the engine. Compared with the drooping Bugatti shape, this gave their locomotives a more

bulb-nosed, thrusting appearance, something that certainly appealed to the macho self-image of America's new industrial designers.

Gresley took time to become convinced. But his own experiments pointed towards the Bugatti principle, and he warmed further towards it after travelling on both the Flying Hamburger and a Bugatti railcar - in the colourful company of its famous designer. He was impressed particularly by the wedge's aerodynamic effect as he watched the flow of air hit the track 50 yards behind the speeding railcar.

After further wind tunnel tests in England, Gresley concluded that a horizontal wedge definitely was preferable, not only for smoke-clearing but also because it cut air resistance to the locomotive itself and avoided disturbance to passing trains. So when Gresley's employers took the high-speed project in March 1936 and ordered a streamlined train to run between London and Newcastle in the north-east of England, a Bugatti-type shape for the locomotive was guaranteed, albeit with many of Gresley's own functional improvements.

The result, after a hectic five months' work at the LNER's Doncaster factory - a fast development programme worthy of Japanese industry today - was the first of the 35 A4s; it was completed less than a month before the start of the new Silver Jubilee service. Despite the pressures of the programme, Gresley found time to visit Bugatti in Paris in June.

Bugatti and Gresley attracted some criticism in the US, where a self-interested Loewy described the former's railcars as having "unsophisticated streamlining" and a "poor airfoil." In a fascinating 1937 book which has just been republished, he was only slightly more polite about the A4s, which he called "rather efficiently streamlined but somewhat lacking in grace."

Whatever Loewy's view, the public loved the A4s. Flocking to see them and travel on the all-silver express they pulled. Two years later, a similar train, the Coronation, was built to race the rival LMS to Scotland. This time, locomotives and coaches both were decked out in blue and the train had a real observation car shaped even more like the Bugatti railcar than the engine itself.

By 1938, the LNER and LMS were wrapped in a battle not only for the fastest journey time to Scotland but for the national short-distance speed record. That July, the Mallard finally put the issue beyond doubt. In the process it beat by a short head the world steam speed record set by the German Reichsbahn two years before. There was little time for a reciprocal challenge before Anglo-German relations degenerated into a far more deadly sort of rivalry.

After the war, Gresley's creation fared far better than Bugatti's. While the railcars were discarded to rot in weed-covered French sidings - only one has been preserved - the Mallard and its sister engines continued to operate right up until the withdrawal of steam from British Rail in the mid-1960s. Four A4s are preserved in Britain, including one named Sir Nigel Gresley, and will be on view at the July 3 celebrations in York; several others are in museums around the world.

Gresley's glory lives on for the public to admire, often in pounding motion on a weekend excursion. But Bugatti's lies immobile in an Alsatian museum, forgotten by all but the most hardy enthusiasts. It is a sad end for one of this art-engineer's most influential creations.

"Bugatti, by Hugh Conway, Haynes Publishing, £24.95.

"Locomotive, by Raymond Loewy, Treford Publications, £16.95."

The Long View

It could be slowdown or showdown



Bear markets tend to react negatively to what might seem to be good news. Barry Riley suggests reasons why the unexpected economic boom is not likely to be viewed enthusiastically by the markets.

Risen by nearly 4 per cent in the first quarter. Elsewhere the UK is booming, and even Germany is now expecting growth this year to top its earlier 2 per cent upper range forecast.

Most economists keep forecasting a slowdown in economic growth internationally, but the deceleration seems to be reluctant to appear. The OECD, for instance, has had to edge up its US growth forecast from 2% to 2.4% for 1988. And here lies the rub of the problem. The more moderate that economic growth is projected to be, the more easily can economists recast in their models the severe mismatches in world trade and payments balances. So is there an element of wishful thinking in

their projections of gentle deceleration and soft landings?

This looks strangely like 1987 all over again and bond markets, not surprisingly, are going through something of a rerun of last year's travails. And while the typical international bond holder's passion for recession and gloom is distinctly unattractive, there has to be a recognition that present policies cannot be sustained for too long, although they just might hold the wobbling structure together until after the US presidential election in November.

Inflation fears are beginning to come prominent again, certainly in the UK, where labour market rigidities are threatening a surge in the level of pay settlements. The Americans do not appear to be afflicted by that problem, but have to grapple with rising import prices instead.

The trends are usually more clearly indicated in the bond market than in equity price trends. Equities are always pulled two ways in a bear market: rising interest rates drag them down, but strong growth in corporate profits and dividends lures them upwards. Eventually the negative forces win, but the process can be erratic.

This was clearly seen last year, when equities completely ignored the warning signs in bonds. The two markets drifted apart to a quite remarkable degree, and the re-engagement, when it came, was catastrophic in style.

After the crash a flood of money was released to bring down interest rates and lubricate the world economy. It worked, but possibly too well. Economic growth has been resumed at an unsustainable rate, huge central bank intervention is necessary to finance the scarcely declining US balance of payments deficit, and rapid monetary growth is a problem in most of the major economies, posing a general threat of inflation. To add to the disquiet, Reuters' commodity price index

"If the market rises, I don't want to lose out."

"When the market is uncertain where should I invest?"

"Is it possible to invest in equities and gilts in the same unit trust?"

"I need income."

"I need capital growth."

The new Grofund British Income Trust. Prospects for capital growth.

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Treasury's speed surprises the City

A DAY IS a very long time in the foreign exchange markets, as has been underlined this week by the extraordinarily rapid about-turn in the fortunes of sterling.

At the start of the week the pound was still riding high against the D-mark, to the extent that there were murmurings in the market that the Government might have to cut interest rates yet again to stem the currency's advance.

On Wednesday, though, market sentiment changed with startling abruptness and sterling plunged.

There were as many analysts as there were theories as to just what caused the slide. Some suggested it was delayed reaction to the previous week's trade figures; others that there had been a more positive re-appraisal of West Germany's economic prospects, or that the dollar had reached a turning point after its long decline.

Whatever the cause, the drop played into the hands of the Treasury. It has made no secret of the fact that, in its fight against inflation, it would prefer to see higher base rates and a lower exchange rate; and on Thursday it moved with a speed that surprised the City to trigger a half-point rise in bank base rates, taking them to 8 per cent.

Yet, that had only a limited impact on sterling, which by Thursday night's close had slipped further to around DM3.1050, compared with DM3.1875 the previous weekend.

London

The biggest spur to equities this week came from across the Atlantic in the form of Wall Street's strong advance on Tuesday when the Dow Jones Industrial Average recorded its greatest one-day gain since January 4.

The following day, London celebrated Derby Day with a 2.3-point rise in the FT-SE 100 index, pushing it above 1,800 for the first time since May 6.

On a slightly longer-term view, though, equities have been going nowhere for weeks now. Volume is low and, since the start of the year, Fossils has been stuck in a 150-point trading range between £1,700 and £1,850. It is hard to see much on the domestic horizon likely to change that. Fall-out from Wall Street, however, could be a very different matter, either in an upward or downward direction.

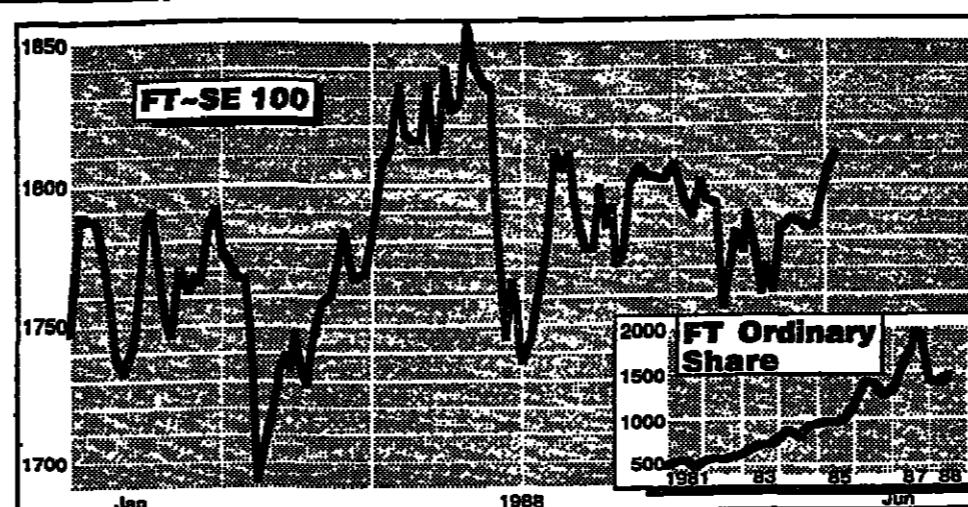
Against this background, the main excitement in the London equity market this week has come once again from fresh take-over bids, although two companies reporting results — Storehouse and FKI Babcock — underlined starkly the very different fortunes that can overtake grandiose mergers after the knot tied.

FTI Babcock, the electrical and engineering group, was formed last summer when FKI Electricals, headed by Tony Garland, bought the much-larger Babcock International in a marriage blessed by that company's chairman, the redoubtable Lord King.

This week brought the first real opportunity to judge how well the couple have been settling down.

The initial results certainly are impressive. Pre-tax profits for the year were £48.5m, up from £11.3m the previous year and ahead of brokers' expectations. Since the acquisition, the group has cut its work force by some 4,000, to 30,000; closed 25 manufacturing sites; brought head office in under one roof and cleared the balance sheet of the high level of debt sustained as a result of the takeover.

Garland says he is committed to 25 per cent a year growth in earnings, coming from a combination of organic growth and acquisitions. But the shares remain on a lowly multiple of just 7.5 times earnings, reflecting concern in the market that FKI



could depend for growth mainly on takeovers. And such animals are decidedly unfashionable in the wake of October's crash.

Storehouse was formed two years ago through a marriage of Habitat-Mothercare, headed by Sir Terence Conran, and the much-larger British Home Stores chain. Sir Terence, the theory went, would inject a new and much-needed retailing flair into BHS.

BHS stores certainly are a lot more attractive to shop in these days, but the overall performance of the group since the merger has ranged from dull to downright dismal — hence the failed take-over bid launched for the group last autumn. This week, the group unveiled annual profits before tax and property surpluses of £11.1m — down £1m on the previous year and at the lower end of City expectations.

The main drag on profits was Mothercare chain, which has hit a bungled move to a new national distribution system, while the performance of the rest of the group was pedestrian. The

group now has a new chief executive, Michael Julian, and the hope must be that he will inject a greater professionalism into a management which has been long on fancy design concepts and fears of a US recession are reason enough for the City to be cautious about the stock.

As far as the London investing community is concerned, a large question mark — although of very different nature — also hangs over Beazer, the building group which this week won its long and extremely acrimonious takeover battle for Koppers, the US aggregates and chemicals business. Beazer won the backing of Koppers' management after slugging it out through the courts and increasing its offer slightly.

It might be a famous victory but where does Beazer go from here? The company, which has grown from virtually nothing five years ago with a series of aggressive takeovers, will more than double in size as a result of the latest deal. But Beazer also has a duty to its shareholders, and the harder the board fights, the higher the price likely to be exacted from the Swiss.

Martin Dickson

The disposal of Koppers' chemical operations will reduce gearing. But Beazer still has to show it can get a decent price for the business, while the rising trend of international interest rates and fears of a US recession are reason enough for the City to be cautious about the stock.

In the battle for Rowntree, it has been a week of waiting for Nestlé to make the next move. The Swiss company seems certain any day now to raise its original £21m offer above the rival bid on the table from Jacobs Suchard.

The options facing the beleaguered Rowntree board are very limited, as was underlined this week in a remarkable intervention by shop stewards representing about half the company's employees. They urged the board to start negotiations with the Swiss company with a view to a friendly takeover that might protect jobs. But Rowntree also has a duty to its shareholders, and the harder the board fights, the higher the price likely to be exacted from the Swiss.

Come fry with me...

MARTIN CRADDOCK is coming to market this month. A man who knows a good recipe when he sees it, Craddock is bringing Lincat, his company manufacturing griddles and fryers and vegetable peelers, to the USM at the latter end of June. And, just to put the record straight, he is no relation to Fanny, who in any event is one "d" less.

Lincat makes a wide range of commercial catering equipment; not the super-heavy duty variety used by the fast food kings but products for the growing numbers of pubs and clubs offering meals, both light and otherwise, on the back of the eating-out boom.

Martin Craddock came to the company as purchasing manager 10 years ago, when he was 28, after six years with Black & Decker. His initial introduction to Lincat was carrying out an analysis of the company at the suggestion of his father, John, himself with Lincat for a few years at that stage.

He says: "The company was just about solvent. There were no controls whatsoever, no production controls, no finance or invoice controls, no records of costs. But I fell in love with it because there was so much potential."

The result was that the Cradocks, father and son, bought a majority shareholding for £7,000 and set about turning it round. "It didn't take long to get the company properly organised, about a year or so," says Martin, now chairman and chief executive. His father is president but, at 65, has pretty much left the day-to-day side of it.

While the business was lacklustre, it became clear very quickly that the potential was there for big margin improvements. Half the income from sales was spent on raw materials

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK

	Price y'day	Change on week	1988 High	1988 Low	
FT Ord. Index	1444.4	+ 14.4	1478.7	1349.0	Wall St. and currency influences.
Acetos & Hutchison	427	- 38	506	427	Recent poor interim figs.
Acro Oil	217	+ 32	217	180	Agreed bid from British Gas.
Century Oils	167	- 18	195	163	Prelim. profits down 13%.
Enterprise Oil	432	+ 36	432	257	N. Sea oil find/takeover speculation.
Freshake Foods	155.2	+ 34.2	159	90	Agreed bid from Campbell Soup.
ICI	510.4	+ 5.8	511.2	947	Fall in sterling.
Inchcape	821	+ 45	821	620	Buyout sector outlook.
Irish Distillers	316	+ 64	316	126	Consortium bid.
Lorbar	252	+ 24	252	163	Buyout sector outlook.
Midland Bank	420	+ 20	425	370	Base rate hike/re-rating.
Rosemarch	786	+ 46	786	513	Windsor Kings Cross redevelopment.
Runciman (W.)	328	+ 37	330	208	Telco's take 25% stake.
Standard Chartered	482	+ 24	563	407	Westpac takeover speculation.
Stanley (A.G.)	305	+ 18	307	166	Increased bid from Ward White.

"We soon got this down to 37 per cent through methods such as single sourcing," says Martin. "We welcomed in salesmen, asked them what they could do for us. It makes a difference."

The business has expanded strongly since 1979, both organically and through acquisition, and now operates through four subsidiaries — Lincat, Corsair, LanElec/Avamore and Abbey.

Junior Markets

The core Lincat business sells 114 products including ovens and water boilers, fryers, griddles and grills, bains-marie and heated food displays. Corsair designs and makes mobile hot drink dispensing machines, heated trolleys, and carvery units produced to customers' specific requirements.

LanElec/Avamore makes meat-slicing, food-cutting and bread-buttering machines plus vegetable peelers. Abbey — the rather odd one out "but it was a good acquisition" — makes clocks and, more recently, wooden trolleys for commercial catering.

Lincat has about an 8 per cent share of the UK catering equipment market, worth about £150m a year. Capitalised at 25m, it has been the key to the group's growth of the practice.

The project management side has grown from pre-tax profits of £211,000 in 1984 to £840,000 last year, on turnover up from £1.85m to £4.75m, and expects to make not less than £350,000 pre-tax this year.

The placing aims to raise between £700,000 and £1m for the company, which will clear borrowings and fund expansion.

Bucknall Austin, the Birmingham-based quantity surveyor coming to the USM in mid-July, also has a father and son team in his history. Charles Bucknall founded a quantity surveying practice in 1947 and was joined in partnership by son David, then aged 23, in 1963.

The practice grew rapidly in size and geographically. "We had 11 partners by the 1980s, deciding everything jointly, even the colour of the walls," says David) until, in 1984, a corporate management structure was introduced. David, now chairman, was managing director until two years ago.

The services provided by the business fall into two main categories, quantity surveying and project management. For years Bucknall has seen the need for, and provided clients with, a separate management function with single responsibility for establishing the time, cost and quality targets of any project.

Bucknall has nine offices throughout the country and more than 250 active clients including financial institutions, the big retailers, major property developers, the construction industry and the public sector.

The project management side was set up formally in 1985 as a separate subsidiary, Bucknall Austin Project Management (BAPM), in response to increasing client demand. For years Bucknall has seen the need for, and provided clients with, a separate management function with single responsibility for establishing the time, cost and quality targets of any project.

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Telecom calls a £2.3bn tune

PRIVATISATION stocks including BRITISH TELECOM and AMERSHAM INTERNATIONAL, as well as pharmaceutical groups, figure strongly in the results of British companies due next week.

● Telecom announces its full-year figures on Thursday. Iain Vallance, the chief executive, looks like unveiling pre-tax profits of about £2.3bn for the 12 months to March 31, up 11 per cent on the previous year's £2.07bn.

Strong growth in traffic volume — particularly from business and international users — should have boosted turnover. However, this could be offset partially by the cost of increasing staff numbers and concentration on quality control.

The City is not expecting any surprises and will probably be more interested in the result of the BT/Orbita negotiations, due at the end of this month.

● Currency fluctuation is expected to have hit Amersham International's profits growth in the year to March 31. On Monday, the health-care and medical research product group should announce pre-tax profits up some 8.5 per cent to about £24m, against £22.1m in 1986-87.

Major contracts in which Bucknall is involved at present include the Birmingham Bull Ring redevelopment, a £45m office development over Liverpool Street underground station in London, and the International Convention Centre, also in Birmingham.

The project management side has grown from pre-tax profits of £211,000 in 1984 to £840,000 last year, on turnover up from £1.85m to £4.75m, and expects to make not less than £350,000 pre-tax this year.

However, changes in the pharmaceuticals product mix has meant the underlying growth is about 12 per cent and accelerating, with the most excitement coming from the co-marketing agreement with Upjohn to sell its heart drug Emissin in the US.

● The industrial side, which accounts for between 40 and 50 per cent of profits, will have had a difficult time too, with its anti-arthritis product coming under heavy competition in the US.

Stripping out £12m of the effects of a 15-month contribution from overseas subsidiaries (which the year-end basis has been changed), and a £10m contribution from property, pre-tax profits should show a mere 6 per cent advance to about £225m.

● Hard on the heels of news of the proposed disposal of its paper and packaging operations, REED INTERNATIONAL is announcing the results of its year to March 31 on Wednesday. A strong performance right across the board is expected to result in a boost in pre-tax profits from £168.2m to at least £225m.

Currency fluctuations will have held back profits by about 20 per cent and analysts will be anxious to hear more details about the sale of Reed Manufacturing Group and the North American Paper Group. In particular, Peter Davis, the chief executive, will be questioned about the plans for the cash (an estimated £280m) generated by the disposals.

● METAL BOX, the engineering and packaging group that has been the subject of takeover gossip, is expected to reveal pre-tax profits between £91m and £94m when it reports on Tuesday.

• MARKETS

Nervous Tokyo nears a turning point

THE TOKYO stock market is again making everyone uncomfortable. The Nikkei average of 225 leading shares on the Tokyo Stock Exchange set a record of 27,889.36 on Thursday, and recent trading has seen ebullient heavy volume of the kind not seen since before October's market crashes.

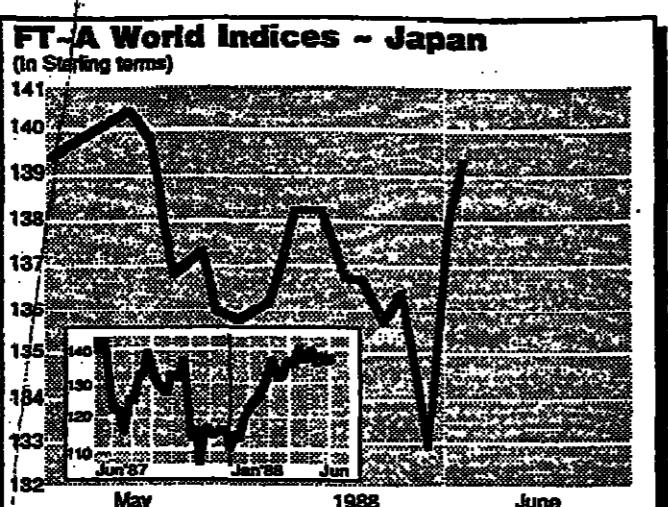
The Nikkei has now risen a breathtaking 32 per cent since its low point in November, and has done so largely without the help of its dominant financial subsector, which accounts for about a third of the index. The average

Japan

price-earnings ratio of the Nikkei index shares is a lofty 65 and the yield a meagre 0.47 per cent.

At least it can now be said that there has been some fundamental underpinning for the sharp rise this year. As the flood of company results in the past few weeks has confirmed, profits have been rising handsomely. Pre-tax profits of industrial companies in the last fiscal year were up, on average, 28 per cent over the previous year.

However, in the current year, this sort of earnings growth rate is unlikely to be achieved. One research institute this week was forecasting only a 7.7 per cent.



Similarly, the economy as a whole is not expected to sustain the rapid growth recorded in the past three quarters. Thus, it is being suggested in some quarters that even the Japanese Ministry of Finance, despite its undoubted influence over financial markets and despite its eagerness to see the stock market remain strong, may not be able to prevent things from going a little soggy in the next few months.

This is creating some anguished moments for investors in the Japanese market, especially foreign investors. Typi-

ally, it is said, foreign investors reduced their commitment to the Tokyo market last October on the assumption that it would soon crash in sympathy with US and Western European markets. As it became apparent early this year that this was not going to happen, they gradually rebuilt their Tokyo weightings, but they still have not got them up to levels they feel would be appropriate.

On the other hand, the Tokyo market is at a peak level today, and the Japanese economy itself may be at a turning point. No-one thinks that Japan is

headed for a recession, but growth is widely expected to slow down. Analysts point in particular to the weakening of growth in industrial production and the rise of inventories. "We last saw that in 1983, and the market went from 12,000 to 9,000," says Joe Williams, general manager of Alliance Capital Management.

Another key to the performance of the Japanese market in the past two years has been a strong inflow of funds. In general terms,

Japan's liquidity, reflecting its current account surpluses, remains very strong, and there is plenty of money available to sustain the stock market, if that is what investors want.

However, some of the main components of fund flow into the stock market are changing significantly. In 1986 and 1987, a coincident in the market — large corporate earnings caused in part by the sudden rise of the yen and a lack of private sector capital spending — meant that many industrial companies suddenly had huge cash surpluses.

Most tended to channel a large portion of them into securities through tax shelters known as Tokkin funds and fund trusts.

Life insurance companies also used Tokkin and fund trusts on a large scale to bolster their earnings.

The flow into these funds in the year to March 31 1988 is estimated at Y14,000bn (247bn) after a similar flow in 1987, of which

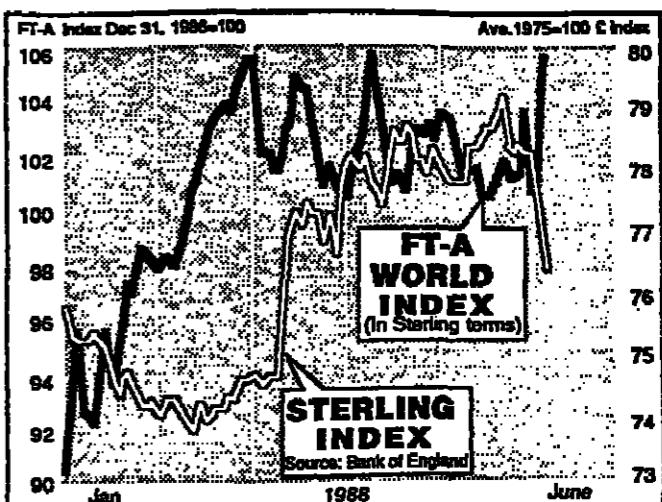
of having to declare losses on these investments.

However, Tokkin funds have been replaced by the return of the foreign investors. Last year, foreign investors sold more than \$7,000m in Japanese equities. So far this year they have been net buyers to the tune of over \$400m. Also, some large investment institutions, especially life insurance companies and pension funds, are expected to step up investment in the equity market.

Then there is the question of whether or not the recent pickup in Japanese portfolio investment abroad will continue, in which case there would be less money available for the Japanese stock market.

Last year, this flow slowed significantly when investors became fed up with suffering huge exchange losses on dollar securities. However, it has picked up slightly so far this year as the foreign currency markets have stabilised. Purchases of foreign securities in the first four months averaged \$4.9bn a month, compared with \$3.4bn a month in the last four months of 1987.

On the supply side of the equation, the schedule of new issues in Japanese equity markets is much heavier this year than last, although some of the issues would evaporate if the market went soft. Banks are having to raise capital to meet new international agreed capital ratio standards, and many industrial com-



panies are lining up to take advantage of their much improved profits.

Another huge tranche of Nippon Telegraph and Telephone stock is to be sold. According to Kleinwort Grieveson, the new issue total this year could be \$11,000m — a huge sum, but not when set beside the estimated combined cash flow of the principal investing institutions of roughly \$100,000m. Thus, excess liquidity or "weight of money" could continue to be a major influence on the Tokyo market.

However, investors could just as well decide to take their money elsewhere. The bulls argue that the Ministry of Finance is so committed to the

Ian Rodger

Dutch/Shell had hired Morgan Guaranty Trust to size up the situation. Both firms kept a solemn silence.

The people keenest to talk work for Texaco. Like nervous people at a cocktail party, they are prattling away too loudly and rudely for people's sake in the ground. Having dismissed Icahn's \$60 a share offer, worth \$14.2bn including other costs, as "a joke" they went on to rubish his finance plans as "sketchy, sloppy and wrong." The last time they tried to lob off shareholders with flip comments rather than sound analysis, Remington cleaned them out of \$10.5bn in the bankruptcy court. A lot of people, from under-worked arbitragers to bored brokers, would love a bat for Texaco for what would be the biggest US takeover.

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Rod Oram

Holiday gives Dow a break

WALL STREET should take more holidays. Investors, refreshed by the Memorial Day long weekend, rushed back to work on Tuesday with an urge to buy. The rally ran only two days but it was firm while it lasted. With prices jumping after weeks of desultory drifting, nobody was churlish enough to complain about the volatility or call for trading curbs.

Market analysis, caught short by the vigour of the upturn, floundered for a couple of hours while they pieced together an explanation. Some optimists tried to argue that it was the start of a longer-term rally which would prevail through the summer. More realistically, though, it looked as though equities were merely mimicking a technical bounce in the bond market.

Battered by weeks of bad news about a strong economy and tame monetary policy, Wall Street had pushed its sell-off of stocks and bonds further and faster than was necessary. Three days' contemplation over last

weekend convinced some investors that the outlook was not as bleak as they had believed.

They found some justification for their view in the latest economic data and signs that the Federal Reserve would not aggressively drive up interest rates in the near term. Concerned by the fragility of the financial markets, the central bank would instead let rates drift higher and then tighten its policy later as a confirming measure, some analysts suggested.

At first glance the economic figures were reassuring. Leading economic indicators, factory orders and job creation were all a tad weaker than in recent months. The most optimistic held that the brief belief that interest rates had peaked, but it is too early to tell whether the cooling is suffi-

cient to keep the lid on inflation and interest rates.

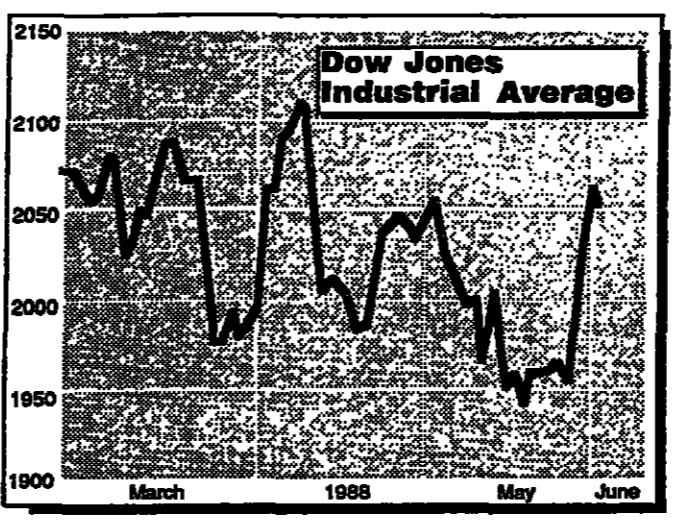
Undeterred by the inconclusive evidence and rising commodity prices, buyers piled into bonds on Tuesday and Wednesday, driving up the price of the Treasury's benchmark 30-year bond by a 0.2 percentage point rise in the unemployment rate could stir the markets.

Clearly, brokers are suffering from the strain of trying to breath life into moribund markets. Perhaps they should have more time off to cultivate rally-inducing fresh views. It seems that Wall Street is working on the idea. Kidder Peabody has had to deny rumours that it was putting its traders on a four-day week and another major firm was said to have ordered its traders to take long lunches.

In reality the pressure for brokerage houses to cut overheads is building rapidly as business remains thin. The trend was shown when Bear Stearns released its fourth quarter results on Thursday. Its net profits rose 29 per cent in the three months ended April to \$57.7m but the growth was owed more to trading on the firm's own account than to customer business. Commission revenue fell 19 per cent to \$82.5m while revenues from principal transactions rose 54 per cent to \$141.6m.

However, around Wall Street there is a sense of foreboding that the pressure to make more money on principal transactions to cover the shortfall elsewhere is going to push a few unlucky or ill-managed houses into embarrasing and costly trading losses.

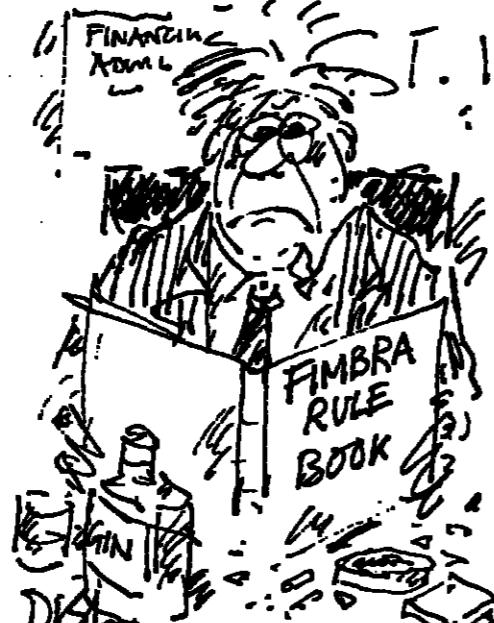
Dow Jones Industrial Average



Investment banking department of Wall Street firms have been trying hard to play their part in keeping up the year-end bonuses. Few thought it likely to emulate the adventurousness of Shearson Lehman Hutton in the \$1.72bn take-over of Koppers, the Pittsburgh building materials group, by Beazer in the UK. Shearson caught a lot of slack from customers and politicians for taking a 46 per cent stake in the Beazer bid, which was successful this week. Shearson will convert its stake in Koppers into a small preferred stock position but has earned \$50m to \$60m for its services.

One huge chunk of business, however, is elevating pulses in the mergers and acquisition departments. Something is going to happen to Texaco, whether it is a takeover from Carl Icahn, the New York investor who holds a 14.8 per cent stake in the oil company, a leveraged buyout from Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, which holds 4.9 per cent, or a raid from some other party. Takeover specialists, salivating over chunks of Texaco, are looking for buyers in the event of a break-up. The most enticing rumour was that Royal

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INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT SINCE 1908 INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT SINCE 1908

Kiss the cheque book goodbye

David Barchard looks at alternative forms of payment

COULD YOU or your family manage without a cheque book? Two building societies, Halifax and Alliance & Leicester, hope that some who do have cheque books will be persuaded to adopt alternative forms of payment.

Last Wednesday, Alliance & Leicester launched its "CashPlus" account, a card account which pays interest and allows you to pay bills by automatic transfer, including direct debit. It also has a phone banking facility.

CashPlus is similar to the Halifax's Cardcash money management account launched 16 months ago. By March 1988, there were 2.6m Cardcash accounts.

A colleague who decided to shed his cheque and non-interest bearing bank current account in favour of Cardcash is enthusiastic.

"The only main disadvantage," he reports, "is that you are not allowed to go into overdraft. But since you can use the Halifax's ATMs (automatic teller machines) to look at the balance in your account right up to the moment, anyone who manages their money at all carefully is unlikely to go into overdraft. The technology of the Halifax's ATMs is far superior to that of my old bank."

For Halifax customers, a lot hangs on how close you are to a Halifax ATM, as the society has decided to go its own way, independent of all other ATM chains and networks. There are about 900 Halifax ATMs around the

country and the number is being increased. By the end of the year, there should be 1,100 Halifax machines. In addition, the Halifax Visa card - due out later this year - will be usable at machines belonging to the banks which take Visa cards.

I have undoubtedly returned a wiser man, laden with white papers, directives, documents and sheaves of notes. Quite how much of my newly acquired wisdom falls within the terms of the Treaty of Rome and will serve to reinforce the process of political and economic integration in Europe, I am not sure.

The first thing I learnt, for example, is that you still need your passport to get into the EC's headquarters at the Berlaymont.

Not had for an organisation that is supposed to be breaking down frontiers.

Something else I learnt is that those smart DTV advertisements urging us all to grab the 1992 opportunity with both hands are a source of some amusement to our Brussels friends. Once you understand how the great EC machine works with its unruly clash of political and bureaucratic forces, the idea that anything as neat as a unified market could emerge by the end of 1992 seems decidedly far-fetched. As one official confided to me: "If we achieve 100 per cent we shall cause a revolution!"

To suggest, as one Berlaymont official did, that 1992 is "a great can trick" may be going too far. But it is undoubtedly true that EC officials spend a good part of their time trying to persuade others - and themselves - that 1992 is going to happen no matter what. There is no law which says the unified market must exist by 1992; it's merely a deadline set by EC officials.

But even if a touch of scepticism is in order, the pace of 1992-related events is about to hot up, and the coming months will bring debate on several proposals affecting personal finance. The EC's aim is to make financial service practitioners a bit like car

drivers: if they are licensed to operate in one country, then they can automatically operate in any other. This should widen the range of financial products available to the consumer and, with luck, bring down their cost.

The proposals fall into three broad areas: banking, insurance and investments.

The Commission has already put out its ideas for banking. It has proposed that any bank which is authorised in one EC country should be free to market its wares in any other without further ado. And it will be able to

change its ideas for banking. It

includes most of the insurance

market in its proposal.

But it also includes the

investment services industry.

It is the investment services

industry that is the biggest

in Europe, the cash saving

will be the largest over 500 Ecu

(about £3.5bn), compared to 4.6m

Ecu in Germany, the next largest

country, they have potentially been chargeable under Schedule E ever since a number of large tax-free payments in the 1960s angered a heavily taxed public.

Nevertheless, such items remain entirely exempt from UK tax if most of the service from

which they arose was overseas.

Specifically, that must account for (a) at least 75 per cent overall;

or (b), if the total service exceeded 10 years, the last 10 years of that; or (c), for employment exceeding 20 years, one-half of the total period and any 10 of the previous 20 years.

So if, for example, you are offered early retirement accompanied by a payment to compensate you for the termination, a careful check on the application of this rule should be made. If you are not able to meet the full requirements for exemption, £30,000 of the payment will still be tax-free, as will that proportion of the rest which your foreign service bears to the total.

Should you be entitled to exemption for pension contribution by reason of service overseas, you will not lose it merely on account of delaying the exercise of your right until some time after retirement and resuming UK residence. This applies even though the delay results in a greater pension - and hence commutation - entitlement.

Retirement benefits, particularly for those employed in the Far East, often are through provident funds rather than pension schemes. Payments from these are relieved from tax specifically by an extra-statutory concession.

In these circumstances, interest accruing within the provident fund during the period of UK residence is allowed to go tax-free.

It might be that, while not resident in Britain, your remuneration package included stock options. If so, you are in the happy position of being able to exercise them following your return without any liability to tax - something not open to your UK counterpart unless the option scheme complies with a number of stringent conditions.

Some (mainly short-term) contracts provide for a terminal gratuity calculated by reference to the period of service overseas. These, too, are treated as remuneration of the day on which they are payable; and since this usually is the final day of service, no tax liability results.

Trusted with the highest exposure to banking, retailing and industrial stock came out best, says the statistics company.

"Recent inactivity in gold prices," it remarks, "appears to have left mining shares, for the moment at least, trading in a thin market."

How to lump it and like it

Donald Elkin gives tax hints to returning expatriates

PERMANENT RETURN to Britain after working overseas often results in receiving lump sum payments of one kind or another - whether or not you are retiring.

The law looks kindly on this, provided your absence amounts to 365 days or more. Thus, you might well avoid UK tax altogether, although it would be unwise to take such a result for granted - especially if large amounts - are involved.

Terminal leave entitlement, sometimes running to many months, can be cleared by a single payment in advance. In such cases, the period of leave often will extend beyond the date of arrival in the UK; and since tax on employment income (Schedule E) is concerned with the period to which a payment relates, rather than when it is paid, a liability to tax would seem inevitable. Fortunately, a specific exemption avoids this result.

Similarly, there is no problem over bonuses or profit-sharing relating to your employment overseas, even though payment actually is made when you are a UK resident. But this will not be the case if your overseas employment extends beyond the date of your return.

Then, you must pay tax on the earnings covering the period of your UK residence. And if your relocation results in a substantial reduction in the level of your activities, be warned that the Inland Revenue's normal method of assessing this figure - by time-apportioning the year's total - could be very disadvantageous.

Some (mainly short-term) contracts provide for a terminal gratuity calculated by reference to the period of service overseas. These, too, are treated as remuneration of the day on which they are payable; and since this usually is the final day of service, no tax liability results.

Indeed, any gratuity paid to you before the end of your employment will be treated similarly, no matter if you were entitled to it contractually.

By contrast, other gratuities are not regarded as income at all and are subject to entirely separate rules. Together with such things as compensation for loss of office and pension communi-

cation, interest accruing within the provident fund during the period of UK residence is allowed to go tax-free.

It might be that, while not resident in Britain, your remuneration package included stock options. If so, you are in the happy position of being able to exercise them following your return without any liability to tax - something not open to your UK counterpart unless the option scheme complies with a number of stringent conditions.

As a result, deferring the exercise of your options until you have returned to the UK could be advantageous since tax in the country of your employment might then be avoided, too. Naturally, UK capital gains tax will have to be considered when the shares finally are sold.

• Donald Elkin is a director of Wilfred T. Fry Ltd of Worthing, Sussex.

FT exhibition

ALTERNATIVE investments are a special feature of the Financial Times Centenary Exhibition, to be held in Westminster from July 7-9.

In a session for collectors and investors, FT Wine Correspondent Edmund Penning-Roswell will discuss investment quality Bordeaux wines and David Molyneux-Berry, head of wine at Sotheby's will lead a tutored tasting. Other Sotheby's experts will form a panel to discuss areas of developing interest for collectors and investors.

The programme also includes sessions on investing in gold, and

capital protection and growth for younger investors.

As part of the centenary celebrations, the NCOS Symphony Orchestra, under Volker Wangenheim, will perform at Greenwich. Glyndebourne soloist Anna Steiger will sing Dvorak, Bizet and Granados. An allocation of concert tickets (including river transport to Greenwich) will be available for people attending the exhibition.

Inquiries to The Financial Times Centenary Exhibition, 175 Munster Road, London SW6 6DA. Booking inquiries: 01-731-4484. General inquiries: 01-925-2323.

NORTH OF SCOTLAND, a small investment trust featured in the Weekend FT's Scottish edition five weeks ago, has topped the new Oxfam Statistics performance figures for investment trusts for the month of May.

Managed personally by George Robb and a co-director of Aberdeen Trust, which has sensibly changed its name back from Abstrut Holdings, North of Scotland tops the list with an 18.2 per cent gain against an average 1.1 per cent decline for the 206 funds in the list.

For the year to May 31 it comes in 13th, with a 19.2 per cent gain against a median 10 per cent decline. North of Scotland was formed in September 1986 to specialise in its local area, and

Scottish trust tops in May

in unquoted companies.

Opal notes a dealers' warning that the closely held shares in this trust can be very volatile. Elsewhere, gold and other commodities have enjoyed a good month, it says, as fear of growing inflation returns.

Opal has also come up with unit trust performance figures to June 1 and says that, here, Australian equities were last

month's runaway success.

It sets out the background. On May 12, the Australian All Ordinary share index slipped below 1,400, a clear 223 points below its October 23 level.

Federal Treasurer Paul Keating announced stringent curbs on state government spending and on May 25 introduced a "judiciously reduced, corporate tax-cutting mini-Budget."

Equity prices cleared the 1,500 hurdle, the domestic dollar closed within a hair's breadth of 80 US cents - "the strongest it's been for some considerable time," comments Opal - and Australia-invested unit trusts leapt by an average 11.6 per cent. They were led by SIM Australian, up 20.2 per cent, with Baring Australia on 18.9 per cent; both valued offer-to-offer, excluding any reinvested income.

Trusts with the highest exposure to banking, retailing and industrial stock came out best, says the statistics company.

"Recent inactivity in gold prices," it remarks, "appears to have left mining shares, for the moment at least, trading in a thin market."

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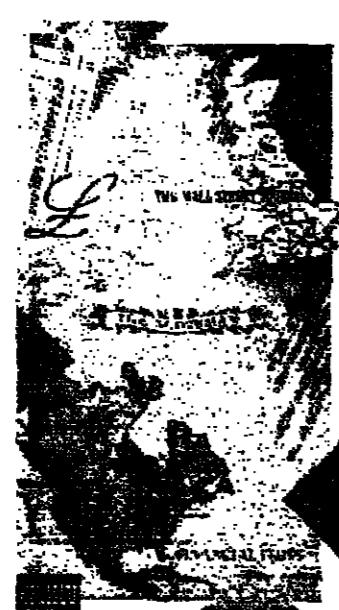
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MARTIN CURRIE

From the Chairman's statement: "I believe the main reason that the Trust's shares are in demand, especially since the October collapse, is because of the relatively high immediate yield and our clearly defined objective of growth in income with a consequent increase in capital value."

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FINANCE & THE FAMILY

Christine Stopp on the 'forgotten' advantages of UK equity income funds

Trust the tortoise to head the pack**PREMIER TOP TEN TRUSTS**

	Capital growth 3 yrs to 1.3.88 (FTAA + 62%)	Dividend growth 3 yrs to 1.1.88 (RPI + 13%)	Yield at: 15.58
M & G Midland	120	61	3.91
Prestigious Extra Income	112	57	4.50
Gartmore Income	108	57	4.02
Wardley Income	107	111	5.55
Vanguard High Yield	100	55	4.54
Garmore High Income	93	64	5.24
Crown High Income	63	50	5.00
Stewart Ivory British	91	112	4.47
M & G Extra Yield	91	44	5.08
Prolific High Income	88	54	4.02

Source: Premier Unit Trust Brokers

policy and good share price growth prospects. The most important of these is yield. If it drops below the level set, the stock is sold.

Prolific's Andrew Cherniavsky, whose High Income trust is Premier's number ten, is less exercised about yield. He describes his trust as capital growth driven. "If you go for growth, income growth comes automatically. You can buy a bit of income short-term. You can never buy capital growth." He agrees with one of the major conclusions of the Premier Survey that high yields on the whole go with low growth. The best growth of both capital and income tends to come from low-yielding trusts.

Cherniavsky's other theory about the success of the income sector is based on its long-term allegiance to the manufacturing industry. This sector has produced a recovery in productivity and an increase in competitiveness as well as high yields. Income funds have, of necessity, been strongly represented in the area.

What is his view of future prospects for income funds? "I would expect the next five or ten years with one or two caveats - to see a continuing revival of UK Ltd. Income trusts will stay in the manufacturing sector, and should continue to do well."

Broker's suggestion to invest for income, on the grounds of the tax bill on dividends, are now beginning to show interest, says Edwards.

It is true that you may land up paying 40 per cent on dividends. On the other hand, yields are still rather lower than on a deposit account.

Investors identify those trusts where income growth was staying ahead of the Retail Price Index. This year, 98 trusts had the four-year full dividend record necessary for inclusion. Of these, 74 beat both the yardsticks laid down. There is, nevertheless, considerable scope for variation.

The Budget tax changes have also helped income trusts. Investors who have been resisting the

growth and defensive qualities, an income trust is therefore attractive as a long-term hold for someone seeking a deferred income - the investor in early retirement, perhaps.

Can the rosy performance picture continue in this sector? David Stevenson, manager of Gartmore Income, thinks real and absolute income growth will be achievable this year and next. After that, the income manager's task could become increasingly difficult.

Dividend growth makes all the difference. Gartmore calculates that an investor who bought units in its Income Trust (number 16 in the Premier league) five years ago would now be getting a yield of 9 per cent on the original investment. Aside from

range of pension contracts under the banner "Gold Pensions, Commissions Free".

Previously, if an intermediary wanted to arrange a contract net of commission, he had to telephone for a special quotation and receive confirmation in writing.

The three Gold Pensions contracts - the Personal Retirement Account, the Corporate Retirement Account and the Directors' Retirement Account - have no commission loading built into the cost.

These products are designed to be marketed solely through financial advisers. It is being marketed through a new division of Provident Life - the Professional Advisers Division. The adviser can receive an instant quotation on the benefits, with nil commission to paid.

The innovation continues in the charging structure:

■ A flat front-end charge consisting solely of a setting up fee of £150 per individual. There are no other initial charges.

■ A level loading combination consisting of a service fee of £1.67 a month and a fund management charge of 0.5 per cent.

The service fee does not increase automatically in line with National Average Earnings, though the company has the right to increase the charge.

The allocation rate is 98 per cent of contributions for all terms. Most charging structures of this nature have a lower allocation for the first year or two and 100 or 102.5 per cent thereafter.

These charges look extremely competitive. But in comparing them with other commission-paying contracts, the client must take into account the amount to be paid in fees.

Eric Short

CHESSE

P-B4; 11 PxP en passant and 12 P-QR3, N-QB3; 4 PxP, N-B3? 5 P-N5, N-QNL

Again this strange defence, a decade later. Black's "innovation" leaves his other knight alone against the army of white foot soldiers.

Lloyd's has always been a competitive market for the good risk, primarily because underwriting is still carried out on an individual basis.

Age, marital status, occupation and area of residence still have a significance to the underwriters in the Lloyd's life syndicates - something that underwriters in life companies, with their mass marketing and processing methods have tended to forget.

For regular premium contracts, GA Life is offering only accumulation units, making a reduced allocation during the first two years on a complex basis, the minimum allocation being 70 per cent for the first two years for unitised funds.

The unique feature of GA Life's personal pension, as far as life company products are concerned, is its low minimum premium on non-contracted personal pensions of £1 a month.

The new system of crediting basic tax relief at source by paying net contributions to personal pensions means that employees not paying tax, such as part-time women employees, can take out personal pensions and get tax credit for the first time.

The cost of this cover from Sun Alliance - one of the market leaders in term business and an early mover in increasing term rates) would be £27.36.

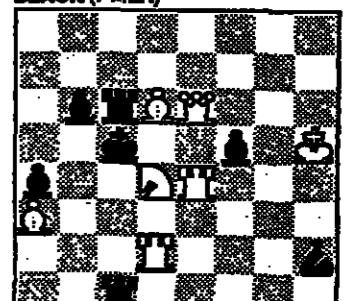
For the time being, the ability of the syndicates to take advantage of these favourable circumstances is limited by the way that business has to come to some extent through Lloyd's insurance brokers.

White's has been prepared to quote premiums or benefits net of commission for intermediaries, such as accountants, solicitors and consulting actuaries, who are remunerated by fees.

This facility was not widely advertised, except by Life which does not pay commission to any third party.

Provident Life Association, the UK member of the Winterthur Swiss Insurance Group, has now introduced this feature in its new

PROBLEM NO. 725
BLACK (7 MEN)



White mates in two moves, against any defence (by A.C. Challenger, 1906)

Solution Page XIX

Leonard Barden

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Since 1986 all our activities have been backed by Credit Suisse, one of the world's foremost financial institutions.

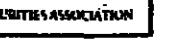
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Winning material, for U 10.

*Source: Money Management, Feb. 1987 & Feb. 1988.

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Close to a century of making money work. Successfully.



• FINANCE & THE FAMILY •

Need for an auditor

I own 50 per cent of the ordinary shares in a private limited company which is trading. I receive my share of profit as an "administration charge" allowed by the inspector of taxes.

This charge is the only income from an unlimited company in which I own all the shares except one owned by my wife.

I charge this unlimited company with all the legitimate expenses involved in my work for the trading company, and myself (and my wife) a salary on which I pay PAYE etc.

Do I need an auditor for the unlimited company, if so what is the legal authority?

"Alternatively is there another way of accommodating this income which does not require an auditor?"

Trying to avoid an auditor's fee may well prove a false economy: unsaudited accounts are likely to provoke detailed investigation by your tax inspector. Your best move would surely be to shop around for a reputable auditor whose fees are moderate.

Scottish estate

I am a UK non-resident, having spent the past 40 years in Zambia working in the mines. I am on extended leave in South Africa pending retirement. My brother is also a non-resident but my sister-in-resident permanently in United Kingdom.

My father died in Scotland in 1961 leaving a simple hand-written will appointing a firm of solicitors as the sole executors.

There was no mention of a trustee.

The will provided for the estate to be divided equally between his three children and a house to be life-rented to his sister. The estate duly was wound up. Recently, by mutual agreement, the house was put up for

sale, my sister having relinquished her life rent.

A few days ago, the solicitor phoned me to inform me that the house had been sold for £50,000.

(Gross duty value 1981, £2,800). Apparently, full capital gains tax had been deducted from the proceeds pending an assessment from the Inland Revenue.

Before the sale took place, the solicitors wrote to say that as my father died in 1961 before the 1984 Succession Act came into force, the situation is that, as individuals, we can either complete title in our own names or, if so desired, sell the property, deducting title from the will.

As a non-resident, am I responsible for paying capital gains tax on my share? How is it compiled pre-Budget and post-Budget?

Ask the solicitor why he considers that exemption from CGT is not available under section 101 of the Capital Gains Tax Act 1978 (if we are correct in inferring that the house was your sister's main residence until shortly before she relinquished her life rent). The Act states:

"104 — sections 101 to 103 shall also apply in relation to a gain accruing to a trustee on a disposal of settled property being an asset within section 101(1) above where during the period of ownership of the trustee the dwellinghouse . . . mentioned in that subsection has been the . . . main residence of a person entitled to occupy it under the terms of the settlement; and in those sections as so applied:

(a) references to the individual shall be taken as references to the trustee except in relation to the occupation of the dwellinghouse . . . and

(b) the notice which may be given to the inspector under section 101(5)(a) above shall be a joint notice by the trustee and the person entitled to occupy the dwellinghouse . . ."

tricks without trouble."

"No doubt you understand new-fangled leads better than I do," said the Abbot sourly. "Now perhaps we can get on with the next board."

West dealt this hand with neither side vulnerable:

N			
A J			
♦ A 12			
♦ K 8 4			
♦ Q 10 8 5 2			
W	E		
9 5 4	K 8 7 6 3	Q 10 8 2	
10 8 6 3	9 7 4	♦ A Q 4	
Q 10 7 5 2	1 3 2	♦ 1 9 7	
K	A 4	Q 10 6	♦ A J 4
S	1 9 6 4	1 0 8 2	
Q 10 2	1 0 8 2	6 3	
♦ K 9 5	9 7 3 2	9 7 3 2	
A 6			
J 9 7 6 3			

West opened with two hearts, a weak bid, Lucius doubled, and East raised to three hearts. After passes by South and West, North doubled again, and the Abbot's bid of three spades became the final contract.

West led the seven of hearts to East's ace, and a heart return forced dummy to ruff. The Abbot cashed the ace of spades and the two diamond honours, then ruffed a diamond in hand, setting up the suit. He ruffed his last heart in dummy, and cashed the king of spades, West showing out. He now led the 10 of diamonds, East ruffed with the 10 of spades, and South discarded a club. East drew the Abbot's knave of spades, but after making his ace of clubs, he had to give dummy the club king and the last diamond. Plus 140 was an excellent score for North-South.

Anxious to teach the young postlads, sitting East and West, a lesson in dummy play, the Abbot allowed East's knave to hold. As South had ducked, holding ace, six of diamonds, he must have two losers in clubs. In this case there was time to get the spades going, so East returned the six of spades to dummy's knave. A club to West's king was followed by the spade nine, which dialogued the ace, and when East obtained the lead with his ace of clubs, he ran three spade winners to beat the contract by two tricks.

"Why duck the first lead of diamonds?" said Brother Lucius, sitting North. "You should win the opening lead and play a club. West takes this and leads another diamond. This time ruff must duck, and one more diamond from East clears the suit for his partner. You play another club, which is won in the ace, but East has no diamond to return, and you collect nine."

"That might work against your average declarer," said the Abbot. "But I would under-ruff with the knave to avoid the end-play."

"Is that right?" queried Lucius. "If you under-ruff East simply exits with a club, and ruffs dummy's last diamond."

"I think," said the Abbot, "that the analysis is a bit deep for our two young opponents."

E.P.C. Cotter

Liability on estate

My father, who died in June 1986, bequeathed a half share of his freehold property to my mother and the remaining half to be held in trust for their four children. The residue of the estate was left to my mother.

As half of the agreed probate value of the property was in excess of £27,000, a small but significant amount of inheritance tax has been charged. I would like to know if the inheritance tax legislation makes it clear who should meet this liability — the beneficiaries (i.e. the four children) or my mother from the residue of the estate?

The inheritance tax payable on the death of your father is partly a charge on the interests in the freehold and partly payable by the executors in respect of the personality. The beneficiaries under the dispositions of the free-



No legal responsibility can be accepted by the Financial Times for the answers given to your questions. Answers will be answered as soon as possible.

tion to do so, or do I have to get any local council permission before starting to build?

You will need to obtain planning permission.

Loan paid off faster

I took out a ten-year £20,000 loan from a bank under the Consumer Credit Act in March 1987.

The interest stated payable is 8 per cent above base rate (then 11 1/2 per cent) giving 14 per cent.

In a recent interview with the assistant manager, I tried to have the interest rate reduced to 11 1/2 per cent (3 per cent above base).

I was informed that the extra interest I was paying was to my benefit in that the capital of £20,000 was being reduced more quickly, thus reducing the 10-year loan period.

The system which your bank manager has described is the one which is normally applied in order to avoid frequent adjustments of the repayment schedule and a resulting increase in handling charges.

hold may require the executors to discharge their inheritance tax liability as well, but a request to that effect ought to be made to the executors.

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• TRAVEL • MOTORING •

AT 2.45 each morning the dust carts of Santiago de Compostela sweep clean the minor sins of the previous day, and Spain's holiest city stands ready for a further pilgrim invasion - as it has for 1,000 years. Once they walked to this remote corner of north west Spain from Cologne, from Chartres, from Arles, even from Dunkirk. A pilgrimage to the tomb of St James the Apostle gave total absolution and a considerable reduction in the number of days you would spend in purgatory. Millions undertook it.

Today they still come, but from Chicago or Des Moines, and by plane, coach, and hire car; some for reasons of faith, others - like this writer - to satisfy a long standing curiosity. For wherever you travel in Europe, you come across the medieval pilgrim route to Santiago. Half the grand churches in France stand on them, for instance. Whole towns owe their origin to them.

Sooner or later, you too must find your way there, if only to fit the last piece in the historical jigsaw. It is, in the words of Michelin, well worth the trip, but the start was unpromising: Terminal Two, London Heathrow, and a two-hour flight to Madrid, a long wait, and finally a connecting flight to Santiago, surrounded by the briefcases and Berseys of the modern business traveller... more purgatory than pilgrimage.

Once on the road from the airport to Compostela, though, all fits into place. This is not Spain but Galicia, a world of neat green fields washed by soft Atlantic rain, more akin to Cork than Castile. As you make the approach up the hill towards the stunning baroque facade of Santiago Cathedral, and the grey bulk of its attendant churches and monasteries, even the light seems north European.

The facade dates from 1750. But this Disneyland of spires and statues masks one of the three great shrines of Christendom - only Jerusalem and Rome equalled its importance in the medieval mind. In the much older Romanesque cathedral behind it, and beneath a sanctuary of mind-blowing vulgarity, lie the relics of St James, patron saint of Spain.

Lost for seven centuries, rediscovered under suspicious circumstances in 844, just in time to spearhead the expulsion of the occupying Moors, venerated until 1589 when removed from the threat of Drake, lost again and finally rediscovered at the height of the Catholic revival in 1875, the story has familiar echoes.

Just as with St Andrew at Amalfi, or Mary Magdalene's tomb in the massive basilica at Saint Maximin, you either believe it or you don't. What is beyond doubt is the profound historical impact such events had both on Europe and the eventual unification of Spain.

The image of the Compostela pilgrim with his staff, cloak, pouch, and slouch hat - complete with scallop badge - is everywhere; in stone on the cathedral facade, in Galicia in the souvenir shops, looking a touch like Paddington Bear. But there is more to this 100,000-population town than its pilgrim industry and mediaeval memories.

Roger Beard pays his obeisance to Galicia, Spain's 'wetland'

Still a pilgrim's way



An old-fashioned but still prevalent way of life in rural Galicia

During term time, it is hot to 4,000 university students, whose exuberance is a welcome counterweight to the coach-loads of greying faithful who flock to the main square. Its covered fish market is a mini-Billingsgate; the meat-market a mini-Smithfield. Above all, it is a town to walk in, particularly on a Saturday when the markets are in full flow, the permanent fair is gearing up for business and the Galicians are enjoying themselves.

A thousand miles south of Ireland, and inland from Vigo, Corunna and Cape Finisterre, you might as well be in Enniscorthy on market day. The rain is as soft but warmer, the bars are welcoming and the food as substantial. Caldo Gallego is Irish stew with beans, sausage and bacon, and a quiet word with the barman will bring you an unofficial aguardiente strong enough to knock spots off a top-quality poitin.

As for the fish, you can expect deep-water dimensions: cod and halibut against the sloppy trawling of the Mediterranean. The sardines are the size of trout. Then there is the music. The guide books compare the Galician bagpipe with the Scots', which it is not, rather than with the Irish, which it is.

Add fiddles, flutes and single-skin drums and you get a sound halfway between the Furies and early court music. They play it, they dance it, they

even put it on their Muzak machines. The language is Gallego, a bastardised Portuguese coupled with Castilian, unrelated to the outsider as Catalan or Provencal. Small wonder that the Madrid government of Felipe Gonzales recognises Galicia, together with the Basque country and Catalonia, as one of the three politically autonomous regions in Spain. But that is where the Irish comparison ends.

Gallego or Galician, these people from the 'wetland' of Spain are no rebels. They supported the Galician-born Franco from the beginning, and were probably bloodthirsty when the Nationalists closed in on the Republicans at Barcelona. You will see the evidence down the hill, in the new town, where the railway station carries a bronze plaque from El Caudillo thanking the local workers for their support in the Glorious Spanish Crusade, i.e. the Civil War. It should be no more shocking than any equivalent plaque on an Italian post office, yet somehow it is.

The railway and nearby bus station - the latter with 30 booths selling cheap tickets to Galician destinations and beyond, as far as Paris - are the key to a fuller appreciation of Western Galicia.

Add fiddles, flutes and single-skin drums and you get a sound halfway between the Furies and early court music. They play it, they dance it, they

fines and least spoilt coast-lines in Europe.

You will take to the coastal corniches and hinterland of Iberia's least known extremity, but you will be rewarded with pure gold... no castanets, no bull fighters or macho waiters, no Anglos or expatriate villains, just green fields and peace which will recharge you more in a day than Malaga would in a month.

Each tenant of those tiny green fields are on average of two milk cows, half-fed and tethered or ploughing in the daytime, and then used to haul the haywain home in the evening. Lunchtime they walk them by the roadside, the way you might walk your dog. Their chickens and pigs run free among the chestnuts, Aleppo pines, and eucalyptus trees which are the main clue to how far south you really are.

Indeed it seems there is a monastery a mile, austere but once grand, and still run by the disciplined Clerics who once served those pilgrims on their various ways to Compostela. Today the farm beef, collect honey, make and sell strong herbal liquors, like the self-sufficient peasant farmers they live beside.

Sixty kilometres from Santiago and equidistant from Corunna, in the mid-equator of nowhere and on a singularly adventurous and pot-holed road, is just

the sort of place to go.

such a place - Sobrado de los Monjes. More a hamlet than a village, it supports a monastic church the size of the Brompton Oratory tended by a small, recently established Cistercian community.

If it is Gallego food you seek, and a bed for the night, try the Hotel San Marco. The beds and the rooms are modern, the owner served his time at hotels from Oxford to Skindale's at Maidenhead, and is well aware of the northern obsession with clean sheets and towels. More to the point, his wife cooks a six-course lunch full of Galician pork, beans, veal, and beef, with an octopus as a starter so sweet and purple that you might take it to bed.

That meal, the local wines, the home-cured ham and home-made cheeses, capped by coffee and his own aguardiente, would be worth the pilgrimage to Santiago even if one had to walk there. Purple octopus leads to purple prose - for which there is total abdication when describing another, different, unique, hyper-luxurious establishment, revered by historians, founded by the couple who brought Spain the Inquisition and Torquemada, the Hostal de los Reyes Católicos at Compostela.

Ferdinand and Isabella's pilgrimage hotel was completed by 1503 around four courtyards, each with its own fountain and garden. Based on an earlier foundation, it claims to be the first hotel in the world, and today is far and away the top hotel in Spain, if not Europe. From the great, wrought-iron screen which surrounds you in theoyer, to the chapel beyond (now a commercial art gallery), and the solemn stone staircase hidden behind the lift, to the mandatory four-poster beds in the rooms, it is a sybaritic delight best reserved for a wedding anniversary, a very amorous weekend or, ideally, both.

Whatever reason you choose, staying at the Reyes Católicos is a great and ridiculous experience, like sleeping midway between the Escorial and the Prado. That is until you reach the breakfast room, which offers a great spread, but seems full of plain-clothed nuns. On balance, apart from one night or two at the Reyes Católicos, you would eat just as well and be considerably more in pocket at Sobrado's San Marco. Be warned, though, this is very isolated country, where the tourist must plan ahead not just for where he stays but also for where he eats.

No such precarousness attends a stay in the Dusit Thani Hotel in Bangkok - one of those de luxe establishments whose skill at pampering the business or holiday traveller explains why hotel standards at the top of the market in the Orient (plus Australasia) are having such a profound influence on standards in the Occident.

At least I think they are, though the US seems to lag, given that you can stay in some very fancy American hotels and still be subjected to horrendous food and money-grabbing service. Not so long ago, in Los Angeles, I asked for a second tea-bag to dunk in my cup. "That'll be another three dollars on your check," the waitress snarled. "You pay by the bag." I almost fainted.

The Dusit Thani is part of the Dusit Thani Hotel Group which also operates excellent establishments in Chiang Mai (far northern Thailand), Phuket and Pattaya. In short, you can fly around Thailand to your heart's content, moving from one strategically-located Dusit hotel to the next, should you wish.

A measure of the sort of service you get was provided on my arrival in Bangkok, where I was met by a Dusit driver and limo. The driver

apologised for being late. But you're not, I said - the plane was an hour early. "Sorry, sorry," he said. "Very sorry, sorry, sorry." Then he uncapped a bottle of mineral water, poured some into a crystal glass, and passed it to me on a silver tray.

The Dusit Thani used to have 900 rooms, but this has been reduced to 525. As a result, it is extremely comfortable. It is also well sited, being close to the business and entertainment district of Silom

Touch of class

Road. In Chiang Mai, the Dusit Inn has 200 rooms and suites decked out in handcarved teak and handloomed silk. The inn is next door to Chiang Mai's famous night market.

I am not that keen on Pattaya, which has its sordid side, but the Dusit Laguna Resort Hotel at Bang Thao Bay, on the sunset side of Pinket Island, sounds like the genuine article.

Nor am I keen on Bangkok, which suffers disastrously from traffic jams and evil car fumes. If you want some good advice, the sensible way to spend a fortnight's holiday in the magic Kingdom would be two nights (no more) in Bangkok, three or more nights in Chiang Mai, exploring the North, and the remainder in Phuket or one of those other southern glory spots.

• The Dusit Thani Hotel is at Rama IV Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand. Tel 236-0450-9, Telex TH 81170 and TH 81027. In London, inquiries to: Axis Sales and Marketing, Tel (01) 534-4202.

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No 002278 of 1988
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION

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IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1986

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on the 10th day of May 1988 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the reduction of the Capital of the above-named Company from £200,000 to £74,562.00. The Petition is dated the 27th day of May 1988.

Any Creditor or Shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the reduction of the Capital should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.

A copy of the said Petition will be furnished to any person requiring the same by the unrepresented Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

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right hand curves on what used to be the main runway of Bruntingthorpe US Air Force base. Again, you learn that excessive power on the driving wheels and coarse steering imbalances the car and slows it down. Screaming tyres sound spectacular but easily the fastest driver, Guido Moch, head of car testing for Daimler Benz, was also the tidiest and quietest.

Finally, a 180 degree reverse turn. A VIP's chauffeur might need to do this if he ran into a terrorist ambush but that is the only time it would be permissible on a public road, said Moch.

Why do we include it? Because it tells you a few things about yourself and the car. About your ability to concentrate under extreme stress and your physical coordination. You learn not to be paralysed with fear but to be able to handle your car if it starts to spin.

You reverse at full throttle to about 20 mph (40 kmh), lift off to reduce the weight on the front wheels and swing the steering through 360 degrees. As the car does a halfcircuite, you shift the transmission selector into low and accelerate away.

It is a barbsome way to treat nearly £30,000 worth of top manager's motor car. But the 300SE had been doing it all day and nothing seemed to have suffered except the tyres.

I spent only a few hours with Moch and his two deputies, Gerhard Goeckeler and Hans Dieter Feller. With a team of technicians and some elaborate electronic timing equipment, they run two-day courses in safe, fast, driving using Hockenheim circuit in West Germany.

Regrettably, these are not open to the public. It would cost far too much for people to pay, says Moch. Daimler Benz stages them mainly for the police and company guests.

And how would the M2 headlamp blaster have fared at Bruntingthorpe? He would certainly have scattered dozens of cones in the slippery brake and steer test, probably spun off the slalom and been slow and untidy against the clock on the main circuit. At the end of the day he would almost certainly have become a better, less aggressive driver.

Much sum it all up. The laws of physics govern our world. Courage is stupidity if pitted against them. So why risk it?

Stuart Marshall

Legal Notices

No. 002298 of 1988
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF TWO

COLLECTING

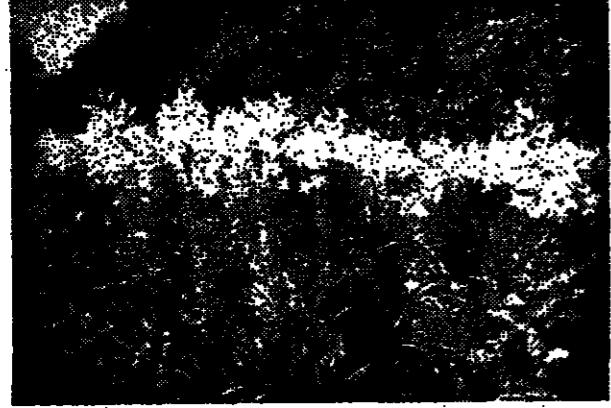
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Make or break time for antique dealers: Antony Thorncroft reports

THIS IS the week which decides whether the leading UK antique dealers can afford to buy their wives a new hat or three this year. The Fairs are in full swing. Olympia opened yesterday. Grosvenor House arrives next Thursday. Running alongside, at the Dorchester, will be the international jamboree of the ceramics freaks. All the world comes to London for the Season in June - or so the antique trade fervently prays.

They will have been praying harder than usual in recent weeks. This has not been a very good spring, and it follows on from a pretty dreadful winter. There is no great mystery about the fall-off in sales. There are fewer Americans coming to the UK and, if they do visit, their antique buying is hampered by the lower value of the dollar. In addition Black Monday hit American fortunes harder than British or continental.

So everything depends on the Fairs. Dealer Alistair Sampson, who will be exhibiting at all three, says "The next few weeks are the most crucial of the year. After them I will either be cutting my throat, or the rest of 1988 will be a doodle."

Things are not all bad. British buying is increasing noticeably, as the wealthy slowly realize that the Budget is going to make them considerably wealthier. There seems to be no curbing the fascination for antiques of pop and movie stars. In the last week, Sotheby's has been host to Mick Jagger stalking antiquities; Bob Geldof, keen on jewels; and Joan Collins, hunting contemporary art.

Japanese buyers also maintain their interest in western art, especially pictures but, to date, they have little use for English or continental furniture. Even so Norman Adams, the leading furniture dealer, reckons that the last three months have been his best ever, with British and European buying making good any American shortfall.

And the really affluent Americans are still quite unperturbed by temporary financial fluctuations, and are paying handsomely for the increasingly rare top quality pieces. It is the run of the mill antiques that could be off loaded on new, less experienced, collectors that have found fewer takers.

As a result more and more dealers have been reduced to taking goods on commission to solve the cash flow problems that have arisen from holding unmarketable stock.

A fantastic picture or rare item,



Francis Danby (1793 - 1861): oil on panel, Landscape with children by a brook

Prayers for a brisk season

of furniture entrusted to them by a private seller can bring a sparkle to their shops, but even if they make a sale and pocket a 5 per cent commission it hardly compensates for the thrill and profit from unearthing an overlooked treasure at a country sale and releasing it to an admiring world.

The fairs could well inspire new confidence. Olympia, with over three hundred exhibitors, is aimed at the interested man in the street, prepared to pay between £50 to £50,000 for a work of art. It is also for the dealers, and in the first few hours stock changes hands rapidly, with many of the best pieces purchased earmarked for Grosvenor House.

This year Olympia should be looking good. It is being held in the Grand Hall, itself an antique, dating from 1886. Visitors, admission £4, should be sharp enough to realize that the better dealers huddle upstairs in the gold section where all the objects on offer have been vetted: downstairs, in the silver section, there is more of a Portobello Road free-for-all.

Specialist dealer David Weston, who concentrates on scientific instruments, sums up the mood:

"The best objects are going for ever higher prices. I suggest that any dealer who manages to sell three items for £2,000 each should upgrade his stock by buying one at £10,000." Like most dealers Weston sees the major fairs mainly as public relations exercises. You re-establish contact with former customers and meet potential new clients. You also get to see, and to purchase, what other dealers have to offer.

In the main a dealer will

perhaps gain acceptance at

Grosvenor House, still repre-

sents the British Antique Dealers Association in all its glory. Most of the 88 exhibitors are its members and there are few foreign dealers, although Bernheim Frères is appearing this year, and offering a very choice transitional com-

mode bearing the mark RVLC

and priced at around £250,000.

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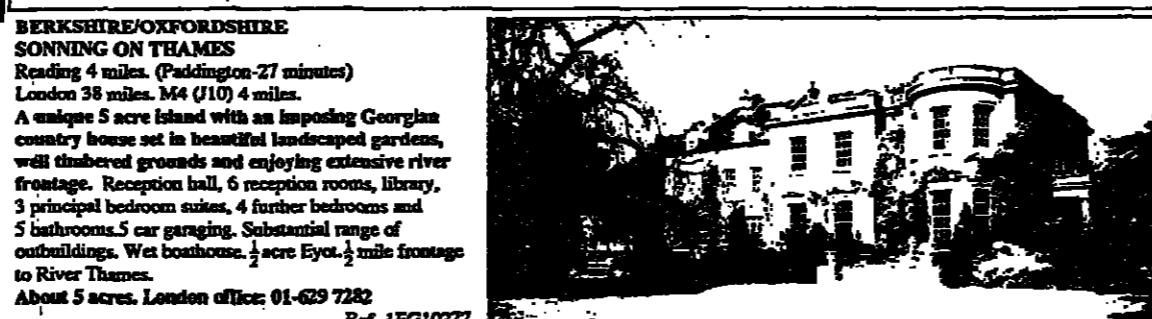
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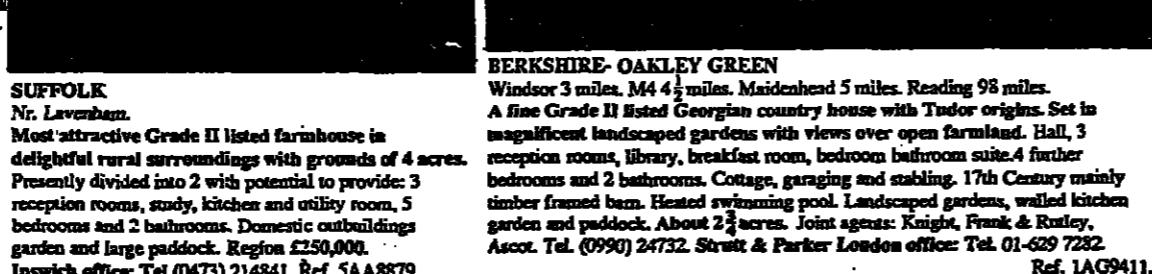
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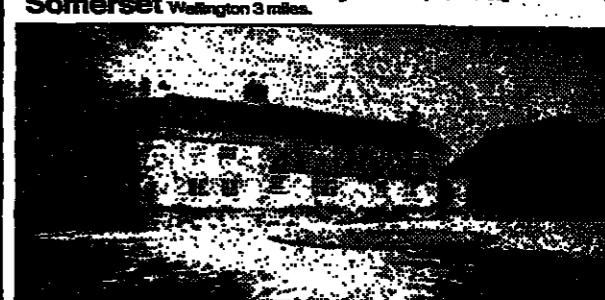
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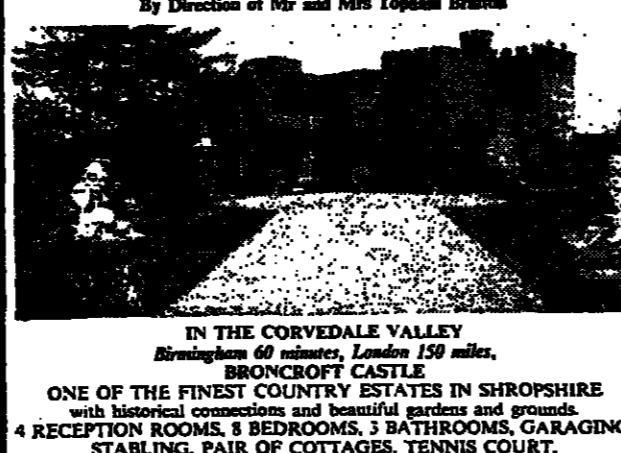
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3 BEDROOMS, 1 BATHROOM, 1 WC, E1

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bathrooms, reception, kitchen, garden, covered parking space.

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LEASEHOLD

FRONTAGE 10' 0" x 30' 0"

10' 0" deep flat on 3rd flr of this very popular & well run warehouse conversion in the heart of Wapping. Reception, fully fitted kitchen, bathroom, WC, garage, parking space, daily porter, communal roof terrace.

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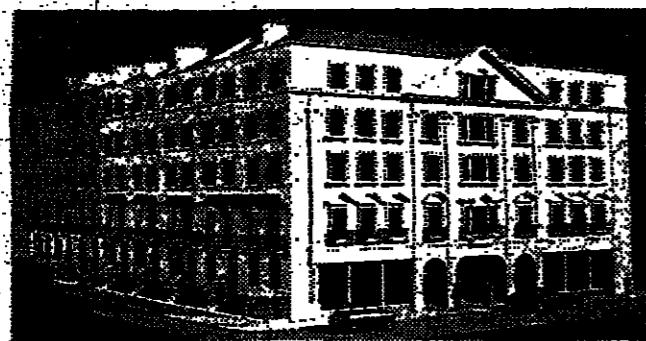
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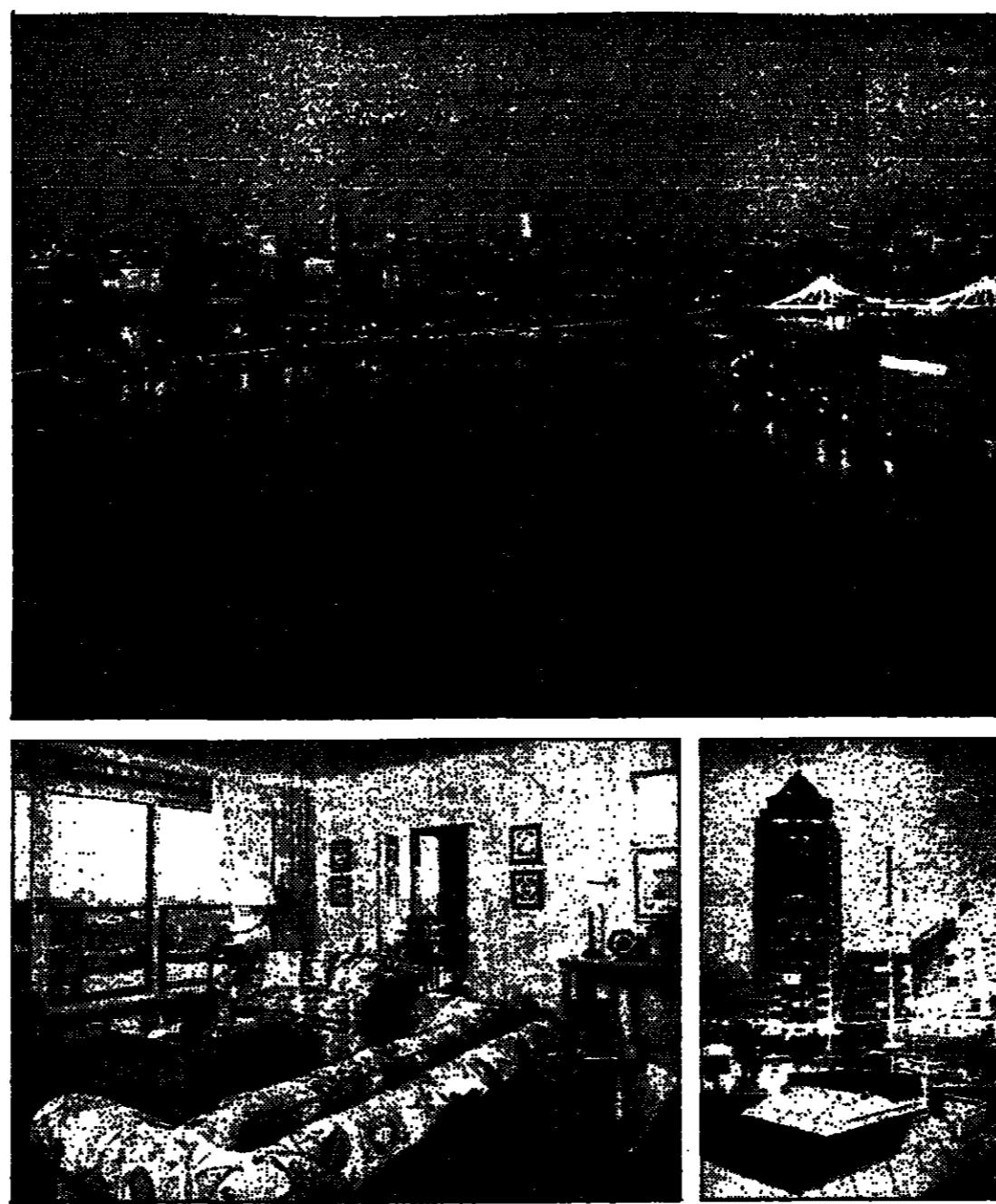
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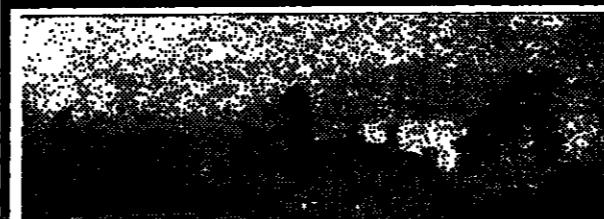
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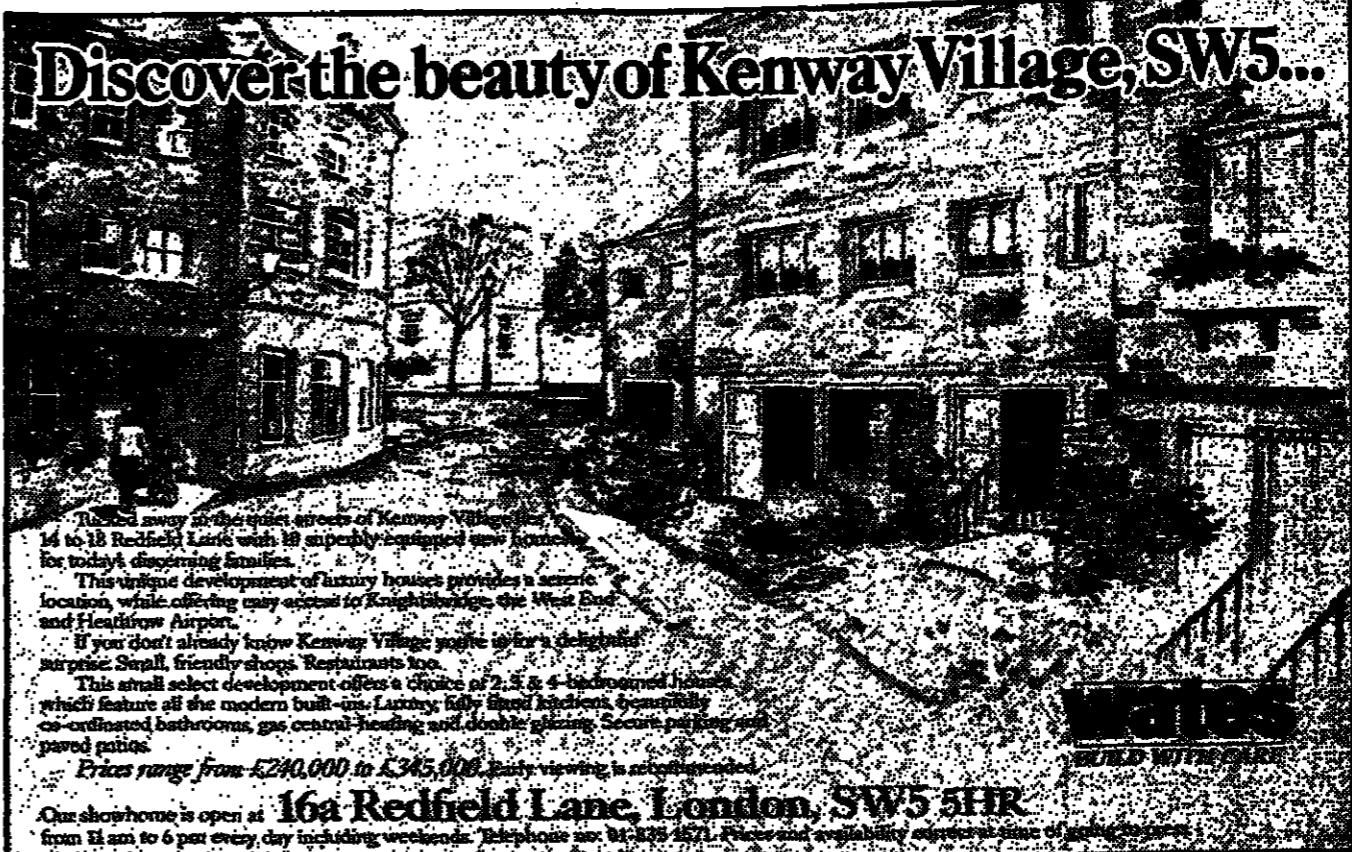
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About 5 acres

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PROPERTY

Harriet O'Brien on the lure of Cyprus and John Brennan on an ambitious plan in the Canary Islands

Home from home on an island in the sun

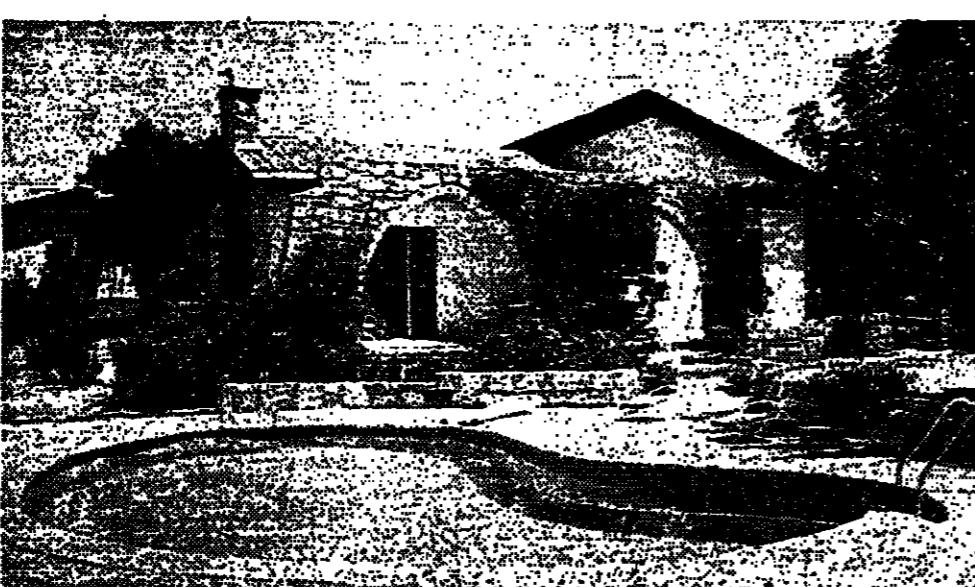
CYPRUS IS growing in popularity for holidays and retirement. Loucas Kitrou, marketing and sales manager for development group Cyberco, says: "There are no golf courses and no horse racing, but the British like it. The cost of living is low, the people are friendly, English is widely spoken and they can really feel at home."

Cyprus does indeed feel very British. English is written, spoken and understood everywhere. Road signs and traffic lights look familiar. There are even two Marks & Spencer stores.

All this is hardly surprising, since the island was governed by the UK from 1918 until it fought its way to become an independent republic in 1960. The tax and legal systems are still based on British's and traffic drives on the left. The two British army bases on the island remain sovereign UK territory.

However, these echoes of Britain are set in the eastern Mediterranean at the crossroads between Europe and the Middle East. The climate is dry and sunny and the sandy and limestone coast is broken by olive groves, vineyards and the occasional burst of colour from flowering hibiscus and bougainvillea.

Then there are the holiday developments, which seem to have driven traditional Cypriot life away from the coastal concrete into the Troodos hills in the centre of the island. The north has been occupied by the Turkish army since 1974. Since this area,



A Cyprus holiday or retirement villa, complete with pool, in the Kamares Village development near Paphos

around 40 per cent of the island has the best beaches and had the most intensive holiday and tourist developments, tourism moved with the Greek Cypriot refugees to the more heavily industrialised south. Now it is concentrated on the coastal strip around the port of Limassol and further west.

The new Cypriot government elected in February this year, and Turkey's efforts to enter the European Community, have

raised hopes that a settlement over the division will be speeded up. Many developers in the south still own land and property in the Turkish-occupied north, and if this more attractive region becomes readily accessible again the solution of the island's political problem would certainly have an impact on the value of holiday property in the less appealing south.

As it is, the capital, Nicosia like Berlin, is physically divided:

Greek Cypriots in one part, Turkish Cypriots in the other. The international airport was there before closed and another developed at the quiet town of Larnaca on the south east coast. That has subsequently become something of a holiday resort, although its attraction is one of convenience rather than beauty. Recent building regulations have put a stop to the appearance of any more apartment blocks. However, flats are still available along the beach

and at the Castella Court development prices range from around £31,900 (£267,100) to £64,400 (£534,700).

Along the coast at Limassol, new five-star holiday developments have been built near the marina, where the Sheraton recently opened and where the Hyatt hotel will be fully operational by 1989. Beach apartments and bungalows with access to hotel facilities are available at the Hyatt hotel complex and at the Amathusia hotel. Prices at the Amathusia beach apartments are in the region of £28,800 (£234,500) to £57,600 (£464,800) for a two-bedroom villa with terrace and garden.

Further information on properties in Cyprus is available from Angela St Clair-Clarke at Prudential Property Services International Division, (Tel 01-837-7242) or Anthony Louzou & Associates, Chartered Surveyors in Nicosia, Tel Nicosia 461-661.

When considering buying property in Cyprus it is worth bearing in mind certain legal constraints. Foreigners are allowed to buy only one property or land enough for one property, about 2,500 sq metres. They are not allowed to use their property for commercial purposes, which means that buying a property to rent out for a profit over the holiday season is not strictly legal, although that does not seem to stop the rentals market. When reselling, foreign buyers do not have to pay capital gains tax, but they can take out of the country only the original

amount used to purchase the property. Any profit can be taken out of the country only at a rate of 20% (£20,000/£100) a year.

It is also worth taking account of the amount of holiday developments currently being built; would the property be part of a building site for the next few years and how would all the new building affect the resale value?

Living in Cyprus is reasonably cheap and easy; income from abroad is normally taxed at an effective rate of 5 per cent per annum. According to one British resident a retired person could live quite happily on a pension of about £1,000 a year.

British Airways and Cyprus Airways fly direct to Cyprus daily from Heathrow. Flying time is about four hours and half hours. Within Cyprus, transport is relatively cheap and easy, distances are not great and taxis and buses travel frequently between the major towns. Larnaca remains the chief international airport, although a new airport has recently been opened at Paphos, in a bid to keep the holiday and tourist industry fairly upmarket, charter flights have been kept to a minimum, and the Cypriots are extremely anxious to avoid the sort of tourism that has developed in parts of Greece and Spain.

For further information about flights and holidays in Cyprus, contact the Cyprus Tourist Office, 213 Regent Street, London W1, Tel 01-734-9222.

WEEKEND FT XIII

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At the Same Time and Place:

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International Property

GRAND CAYMAN - CAYMAN ISLANDS BRITISH WEST INDIES

A FOUR-STAR holiday resort, claimed to be the biggest of its kind in Europe, is to be built on Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands. The 68-acre Puerto Venecia project, with a total of 9,000 beds, is planned to open at the end of 1991 after investment of some £200m.

The development, 11 miles from the island's airport at Puerto del Rosario, will take the form of an Iberian-style seaside village. Construction will begin next spring. There will be 1,300 apartments of various sizes in houses of two to 3½ stories, as well as three hotels with a combined 894 rooms. Of the 9,000 beds, as many as 2,000 will be in a residential colony for resort employees.

PUERTO BANUS

Magnificent beachside garden apartment with terrace, in Alcazaba. 4 beds, 4 baths, beautifully furnished. First time offered. PRICE: £235,000

Playa del Duque: beautiful 2 beds, 2 baths apartment, minutes from Puerto Banus. PRICE: £125,000

LOS MONTEROS - MARBELLA

Very spacious 3 beds, 3 baths villa with large living room and dining room, leading onto large sunny terraces overlooking the swimming pool. Master bedroom with terrace has panoramic views of the sea. Beautifully mature gardens, fully furnished.

Financing. Detailed plans and tender specifications are being prepared by Generalconsult, a Madrid firm owned by local Swiss interests.

Unlike some other developers in the Spanish Islands Bleeker is

not faced with opposition from local people, as the Fuerteventura authorities are giving active support to the scheme. He aims for what he calls "soft and harmonious tourism" combining Swiss quality standards with Spanish cultural and architectural concepts.

The site for Puerto Ventura

is now an expanse of sand while a number of squatters' huts are being cleared away in a "more or less friendly manner."

Financing of the project will be provided to about one-third by equity capital with the rest coming in loans from European banks. Investors will be sought in Britain, Germany, Scandinavia and Spain itself, but Bleeker intends to retain a substantial

stake and control over the project.

Costs for tourists are put at about £75 a night, and a computer system will allow visitors to take their pre-paid meals at any restaurant in Puerto Ventura rather than being bound to a specific hotel.

Bleeker is expecting tourists

from all over the world, in fact, 1992 - the first full year of operation for Puerto Ventura - is one in which Spain will be going all out to promote tourism in connection with the 500th anniversary celebrations marking the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. The country also will host the Barcelona Olympics and the world athletic championships.

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GARDENING

Robin Lane Fox picks some Chelsea exhibits robust enough to spend an English summer out of doors

Watch out for Yaks in the front garden

FLOWER SHOWS have an art of their own. Do not feel depressed if your garden's flowers are not looking like those at Chelsea. Most of the exhibits are good under glass; they have not had to compete with night frosts or the bursts of rain on holiday weekends. One good reason why you and I cannot grow such daffodils or peonies is that we grow them outdoors. It takes me at least a week to come back to reality and see which show exhibits might stay the course. Now is not necessarily better.

What about the new Rose Financial Times? I thought the shape of its flowers was distinctive; a full, rounded mass of petals that tended towards a peony but which marked it out among its neighbours. It is not really a Bourbon variety, although it has a pleasant hint of the older varieties of rose blossom. It has the powdery, myrrh scent which befits a descendant of that admirable pink rose, Constance Spry. The colour is a clearer pink, less salmon than this newspaper (and it does not leave black smudges on your fingers).

I wondered how its heavy flowers would stand up to an English

summer but its breeder, David Austin, told me that, last year, it proved itself much stronger in the neck than it might seem when fresh from a greenhouse. It is certainly vigorous and he advises that it can be pruned quite hard each year, like an ordinary bush rose. It has a long season, flowering twice. If unpruned, the shape of the bush is tall and quite narrow. In its breeder's view, it is "perhaps rather too upright." Eight years' selection goes into the showing of a new seedling, chosen from a field of up to 20,000 starters. Rose Financial Times' parents are unnamed Austin seedlings with Constance Spry blood in them; the cross was made between one with exceptional colour and another with proven vigour. There is just enough time to breed a new rose between the cyclic peaks of a sterility crisis. When that pound collapses, let us hope that Rose Financial Times is still holding up its handsome pink head at the back of the rose bed. It could be placed cleverly to give height as a specimen rose in a small garden.

David Austin's new roses struck me as the best in the Chel-



sea tent. I very much liked his white Winchester Cathedral, which also has the powerful Spry scent. The Constance is another pink rose with a difference. Now in its second year, it is low-growing, but one of its parents is Counte de Chamber. This rose often is classed as a Portland variety and I find it the most willing of all small, old-fashioned roses to flower twice. The

white clematis (John Paul II) which has a discreet pink flush. The lumps were staged admirably by Woodfield Nurseries, Clifford Chambers, near Stratford-upon-Avon. The clematis was shown by Fisks of Suffolk. Clematis, however, have been losers at Chelsea in the past few years. They cut a much smaller dash in the main tent and I hope this decline is soon reversed.

As yet, there is no papal delphinium. Every year, I buy seed at Chelsea but do not raise many plants because I let it dry out for a critical day in the first fortnight. This year, I vow to pay up and buy new plants which I can then increase from cuttings. From Blackmore and Langdon, I want the rich yellow-cream Sunbeam and the deeper blue Fenella. These named forms, like Kelvin's named peonies, simply are better.

For once, I liked a rose called Wimborne. Usually, the Chelsea exhibitors insist on packing the sugary pinks among large-flowing purples and whites; they had new salmon-pinks, crimson, and an aptly-named San Diego Red. These climbers are useless outdoors in Britain, so readers will have seen a small bolt-hole or a conservatory ought to chase them up.

I have, however, had a soft spot for the brilliant colours in climbing bougainvillias. Nobody seems to have picked up a remarkable exhibit of them from Pernier's Jean Rey, Carpentras, 84150 Jonquieres. These French growers were not just exhibiting flowers and curious neighbours. Hilliers fell into the trap again this year. However, Knaphill and Slocock had graded their azaleas charmingly through

great uniformity in the offspring, but that this kind of inbreeding can also lead to weakness and unsatisfactory performance. It is also widely understood that breeding in a very mixed population can sustain vigour, but at the expense of uniformity.

The idea behind the F1 hybrid is to get the best of both worlds by using two unrelated but inbred varieties to produce a hybrid which, in this first generation, will have great uniformity combined with hybrid vigour. The skill, part scientific, part intuitive, is in choosing and maintaining the right parent stocks.

Because only the hybrid seed from these parents is sold and the parents themselves never leave the nursery of the breeder or his chosen producers, the F1 technique provides the breeder with a built-in copyright which is independent of any law. This in turn makes it possible for the breeder to produce on quite a scale, since each parent seed will produce a plant able to produce hundreds or even thousands of seeds according to its type and this bulking-up for sale can be

done by accredited growers not necessarily or even normally in the same country.

An example of this can be seen in a relatively new seed producer in Britain named Floranova. This company occupies a rural site in Norfolk close to the tiny village of Foxley, beside the main road from Norwich to Kings Lynn. The site was chosen because land was relatively cheap, some glass houses were already available

board to many parts of the world. As Mike Hough, the founder of Floranova, explained, even Japanese seed producers, visiting Germany and Holland, can fly from Amsterdam to Norwich within the hour, visit the Floranova nursery, return to Amsterdam the same day and board a plane for Japan. Customers come not only from the Far East but from Europe, North Central and South America and Australasia.

There are no restrictions on building more. There was also plenty of labour with a tradition of working with plants and, perhaps most important, Norfolk has close contacts with Europe.

The links have been improved by the development of Norwich as an industrial city and of Norwich Airport as a spring-

of seed companies in the US, which raised Nikki, is giving the Norfolk variety top billing.

There are many other success stories at Floranova and clearly more to come, for when I visited the nursery recently I saw many exciting new varieties under trial. Some will be available next year, others must wait to be perfected, but I found everyone

was working with enthusiasm.

The latest move is to appoint a product manager with the aim of establishing an even closer link between producer and customer. In the past there has been a tendency for plant breeders to follow their own bunches to dream up new varieties which they would like to possess without first making certain that there is a large potential market for them. Now the highest priority in Norfolk is being given to varieties which are required but which are not yet being produced.

I saw poppies of the Iceland

type which have entirely new

parentage, are capable of producing far more flowers and can be grown as annuals, sown and

flowered in the same year, instead of as biennials in the

more laborious traditional way. I also saw new gladioli and streptocarpus varieties which are more compact than the existing ones and so are easier to pack and transport to market; calceolarias that are also more freely branching and prolific and new tomatoes, capsicums, aubergines and other prestige vegetables so compact that they can be grown in pots or growing bags. Flora-

nova calls them patio vegetables.

At Floranova only the mother

seed is produced in glasshouses

in which growing conditions are closely controlled. This seed is sent to selected seed farms in various parts of Europe and Central and South America to be grown on and bulked up for commercial requirements, after which it comes back to Norfolk for testing, cleaning and dispatch to the retail seed firms and commercial plant producers, who will in turn sell packaged seeds and container-grown plants to the public. The Floranova variety names will appear on these packets and containers, but not the Floranova name itself, so the public may never learn the full story behind this British success.

Arthur Hellyer on how a Norfolk plant breeding company is successfully managing to bridge the first filial generation gap

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BOOKS

**Anthony Curtis on a reappraisal
of a tempestuous literary life**

Pound revalued

A SERIOUS CHARACTER: THE LIFE OF EZRA POUND
by Humphrey Carpenter. Faber & Faber.
£20.00, 1,005 pages

READERS of last Saturday's Weekend FT will have seen an extract from this huge biography of Ezra Pound, relating to his early years in Europe when he then protégé and fellow American expatriate T.S. Eliot was writing *The Waste Land*. That episode, whereby he earned the admiring gratitude of Eliot for persuading him that the original text needed cutting by about half before it was published, falls into place as one small brick in the massive pile constructed with exemplary patience by Humphrey Carpenter, already much respected as a biographer for his lives of Tolkien and friends.

As a bursting young man from Pennsylvania, who had acquired, while at Penn State University, a passionate interest in the poetry of the troubadours, and a keen sense of the beauty of European culture, Pound acted in London and Paris as adviser and publicist for various poetry magazines. He possessed a keen flair for fresh talent; he recognised the genius of both Eliot and Joyce before either was well-known.

But if Pound was quick to see what needed cutting in other people's stuff it never seemed to have dawned on him that his own might also benefit from cut-and-dried. Pound's voluminous work contains much that is impenetrable, dense thicketts of verbiage in both verse and in his own eccentric prose. This last was designed to catch the tone of Pound's speaking voice through joke spelling, broken sentences and a heavy use of signs as the chief punctuation mark.

The main repository of his verse was a series of *Cantos*, written throughout most of Pound's adult life, and meant ultimately to be read as a continuous whole. Different sections appeared at different times with long intervals in between. Each is structured around the figure of a heroic individual taken from Chinese, Italian or American history.

The tone is incantatory; the typographical arrangement and lay-out, short broken unjustified lines in uneven align-

ments, is crucial to the sense, which modulates from the personal to the historical with deliberately bewildering speed. Here, and in his earlier, shorter poems, of which *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, a sardonic account of London literary life, and *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, are the most important, Pound performed the prosodic revolution "breaking the pentameter" - the basic unit of English verse, and replacing it with lines whose rhythm was to be discerned as much by the reader's eye as his ear. These on-going free verse paragraphs do, it must be said, contain a proportion of lines of the most haunting beauty, embedded in a packaging of Chinese calligraphy and obscure phrases in Greek, Latin, Provencal, medieval Italian, and other tongues both living and dead, together with a consistent rhetoric of hatred directed against usurers (Pound's habitual code-word for Jews).

The poetry is thus defiled by some of the most obscene anti-Semitism to have reached the printed page outside of Nazi Germany. Pound, who lived as a permanent resident in Italy up to and during World War Two, gave whole-hearted support to the Fascist cause, making, at his own request to the Italian Propaganda Ministry, a series of wartime broadcasts to America from Rome, delivered as coming from "Old E" in a hill-side accent. One of his models was Father Coughlin, who had done a great deal to stir up racial hatred in his fireside chats on radio in America before the war. Another broadcasting admiration of Pound's was "Lord Haw Haw," to whom he wrote several friendly letters praising his work, one of which ended "Heil (sic) Hitler."

Carpenter leaves one in no doubt as to the style and content of Pound's own broadcasts. They were poisonous.

At the end of the war when the American army moved into Italy, Pound was taken into custody and the awkward question arose of what to do with him. Was he guilty of treason, or had he merely been exercising his right to freedom of speech in exceptional circumstances? The trial of Pound which would have answered this question was never held. The only courts which Pound attended were ones to determine whether



Head of Pound - a drawing by Gaudier-Brzeska

he was in a fit mental condition to stand trial.

Carpenter reveals the complicity between both doctors and lawyers on both sides which resulted in a verdict that he was of unsound mind, and therefore could neither be acquitted nor declared guilty. Instead he remained for more than a decade as the most celebrated inmate of St Elizabeths Hospital, south-east Washington DC. The original function of the hospital was to care for the insane of the US armed forces as well as for civilian patients.

Inevitably in this, the last of many trials Pound played, that of a modern King Lear, all one's sympathy goes out to him. He accepted his incarceration with the same energetic fortitude with which he had reacted to all the other vicissitudes of his embattled life. Fairly soon it was back to the writing desk and business as usual; his capacity for work was indomitable.

When at last he was released, on a legal technicality, he had a grown-up son by his wife Dorothy (née Shakespeare) and a grown-up daughter by his long-standing mistress, Olga Rudge. Pound was faced

by the dilemma of which of these two loyal and devoted women to live with in Italy. For the first years of his new freedom he went to Dorothy, but in his last illness he rejoined Olga, who stayed with him to the end. Their daughter, now Mary de Rachewiltz, has spoken about her father and we see the message from her viewpoint, from time to time illuminating Carpenter's narrative.

In his extreme old age Pound attracted many visitors, among them the Jewish poet Allen Ginsberg, who played him Beatles records. In the course of their conversation Pound is reported to have said: "Any good I've done has been spoiled by bad intentions - the preoccupation with irrelevant and stupid things... But the worst mistake I made was that stupid suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism."

Armed with this absorbing, sensitive, fully documented and completely honest biography, we can for the first time see Pound for what he was and make up our own minds about him. He emerges as a heroic figure, even if it is at times the heroism of Satan.



Philae - from an oil painting by Lear, 1854

discuss, among other projects, his elaborations of existing "sketches from Nature," adapted to correspond with the "landscape, lines & feelings" of Tennyson's poetry.

The letters also consider the problems posed by the representation of particular spots: the difficulty of finding a view of Jerusalem which provides sufficient "historical interest" at sunset, for example, and the need to preserve the "solemnity & quiet" appropriate to the antique character of Athens.

In his plans to visit new places, Lear was constantly hampered by a lack of money; while enthusiastically planning a visit to Greece in 1881, he nonetheless remarks wistfully: "If I could get a lot of spontaneous tumultuous fun, I would go to Ceylon, & for once & all draw a tropicole seen."

Twelve years later, the painter did in fact visit both Ceylon and India.

After buying land in order to build a villa in San Remo, he laments: "As I have sold no drawings this winter & have no commissions ahead I shall endeavour to live upon little Figs in sum-

mertime, & on Worms in the winter." Lear began to publish his nonsense writings in the 1840s, and devoted much more attention to them later in his life. His letters are often inventively nonsensical: he observes, at San Remo, that "my only remaining fig tree was accidentally smashed by a lad with a ladder, so that figuratively speaking I now cut a figless figure."

The painter's accounts of his nomadic existence are immensely

enjoyable to read and sometimes very moving: they provide glimpses of his gentle and affectionate disposition, and of his struggles against loneliness and melancholy. Many of the letters contain thumb-nail sketches of landscapes, and wryly comical drawings of Lear himself. The delights of this limited selection emphasise all the more clearly the need for a complete edition of his correspondence.

• Edward Lear died 100 years ago, in January 1888. On Monday at 6.15 pm, a tablet to commemorate him will be unveiled in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey, followed by readings from his poetry, and songs. An exhibition of his paintings, letters and books will be on view at the Fine Art Society, 148 New Bond Street, from Monday to July 1, and at Sheffield City Art Gallery from July 8 to August 7.

Chloe Chard

Travel stuff and nonsense

EDWARD LEAR: SELECTED LETTERS
edited by Vivien Noakes. Oxford University Press. £21.50, 225 pages.

ONE OF the dominant themes of Edward Lear's letters is his love of travel. His decision to spend long periods of his life in Italy and Corinth - and to pay extended visits to a number of more exotic locations - was partly motivated by worries about his health: Lear suffered from epilepsy, failing eyesight and a general susceptibility to illness. He frequently notes the beneficial effect of a warm climate and agreeable surroundings, and complains bitterly of the "profoundly horrible & filthy" existence imposed by the English winter.

Lear's travels, moreover, played an essential part in his work as a landscape painter. After an early career in zoological illustration, he developed a strong interest in natural scenery during the mid-1830s, at the age of 23, and began to produce both topographical paintings and illustrated travel books. His letters

to his mother with a daughter and son, and to his father, show him as a man who is "a lot of unpleasant things happened."

Like a good soldier Lt Lawrence doesn't tell us what unpleasantness he is referring to, but he leaves his mother with a disconcerting feeling the day he tells her: "I'm a trained killer, you know, every hit as good as those Marines and Paras."

Had Lt Lawrence's diary continued in this vein, it is doubtful whether it would have made much of a stir. What changed things was the end of the Falklands War when Lt Lawrence had his head blown off by a high velocity bullet as he led an attack on the Argentines, who were encamped on a small mountain overlooking Port Stanley. It left Lawrence with severe hemiplegia of the left-hand side and related nervous and physical disorders, but with a recovery that, judging by the gruesome colour photographs of his operation, is little short of miraculous.

The bland official Army version of the event that changed Lt Lawrence's life - and that of practically anyone, including his father, who knew him well - appeared in the *London Gazette*. The account was the kind that earns a soldier like Lt Lawrence a Military Cross, and it did. Leading his men from the front, under intense cross-fire, "his actions were an outstanding example of leadership under fire and courage

did so after voluntarily submitting himself to a grueling selection test.

After the tough initial course, Lawrence was put through some rigorous training with Gurkhas, wielding baseball bats and pretending to be Ishmaelites. Then came Kenya, jungle training in Asia, parading outside Buckingham Palace and, inevitably, Northern Ireland, "a very unpleasant place" where "a lot of unpleasant things happened."

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A very personal war

WHEN THE FIGHTING IS OVER: A personal story of the battle for Tumbledown Mountain and its aftermath
by John Lawrence and Robert Lawrence. Bloomsbury. £12.95, 156 pages.

JUST WHEN we all thought that the Falklands was a dead issue, here we are again six years later with a book that, thanks to much conscious as well as unconscious pre-publication publicity about a certain BBC film drama on the same subject, seems destined for the best-seller lists.

The first thing that needs to be said about *When the Fighting is Over* is that it is not a particularly well-written book. With the exception of the late naval Lt David Tinker's moving, posthumous letters and diaries, the written account of the Falklands war on the British side has been left to journalists, academics, and, as in this latest work, by Lt Robert Lawrence and his father, retired Wing-Commander John Lawrence, military mind with limited artistic potential.

And yet, clearly, the hundreds of people who will wish to read *When the Fighting is Over* will be unlikely to be motivated by the pursuit of art. Instead they will be anxious to know just what it was that got the Ministry of Defence, the regiment of Scots Guards, Conservative MPs, and most of the British media into such a tiff. A TV film drama is here one day and gone the next - but a book lingers, in the shops.

Both prior and during the war, Lt Lawrence seemed to play the kind of role an Army recruitment office would be proud of. He was the public school boy who, rather than enter a regiment on the strength of a university degree,

did so after voluntarily submitting himself to a grueling selection test.

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After the tough initial course, Lawrence was put through some rigorous training with Gurkhas, wielding baseball bats and pretending to be Ishmaelites. Then came Kenya, jungle training in Asia, parading outside Buckingham Palace and, inevitably, Northern Ireland, "a very unpleasant place" where "a lot of unpleasant things happened."

Like a good soldier Lt Lawrence doesn't tell us what unpleasantness he is referring to, but he leaves his mother with a disconcerting feeling the day he tells her: "I'm a trained killer, you know, every hit as good as those Marines and Paras."

Had Lt Lawrence's diary continued in this vein, it is doubtful whether it would have made much of a stir. What changed things was the end of the Falklands War when Lt Lawrence had his head blown off by a high velocity bullet as he led an attack on the Argentines, who were encamped on a small mountain overlooking Port Stanley. It left Lawrence with severe hemiplegia of the left-hand side and related nervous and physical disorders, but with a recovery that, judging by the gruesome colour photographs of his operation, is little short of miraculous.

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DIVERSIONS

All blown up to a great proportion

IT MIGHT be tempting the fates for a newspaper to sponsor a hot-air balloon but that is exactly what the Financial Times has done to promote its centenary celebrations.

Hot air balloons are being used increasingly by major companies to advertise themselves and their products - although the idea of advertising with balloons might seem unlikely.

For a start, you can't steer them. The basic equipment is hardly different from that which the brothers Montgolfier developed two centuries ago and balloons are just as weather-dependent as ever they were. It is unusual for a launch to be made when wind speed exceeds ten miles per hour or so and gusty or unstable conditions are avoided completely.

The British climate allows the possibility of flying on 200 days in the year but many of these are only briefly suitable. In summer, the danger of thermals frequently renders an otherwise perfect day unflyable after mid-morning. Hardly ideal parameters for a commercial operation.

Nevertheless, the balloon advertising industry, like the sport, continues to grow. "People can't resist looking up into the sky," says James Money-Kytle of Sky High Balloons. "There's something utterly romantic about these huge, silent shapes drifting wherever the wind takes them. And if you can't help wanting to be up there too, Money-Kytle's assessment cannot be far wrong, given that new balloons are coming on to the British register (which currently lists 736 of them) at a rate of approximately 100 a year.

Hot air ballooning was revived in this country in the late 1960s, thanks to the US Navy which used balloons for meteorological research. From these unlikely beginnings has emerged what was, in 1987, according to the Sports Council of Great Britain, the nation's fastest growing sport. Not that it is yet very large; there are probably no more than 150 "hard-core" pilots in the land. There are perhaps twice that number of occasional flyers.

There is more to ballooning than simply climbing aboard with a few friends. There is the matter of flight planning to consider for a start. This is not easy, given that the sole determinant is wind direction, which may change at any moment.

"Whatever precautions you take," says Money-Kytle, "you are bound to end up in places you don't want to be, from time to time. Livestock and people can be a major problem." He recalls a four-page complaint filed against him by a lady who claimed that he was flying so low that he brushed through her azaleas. "But," he continues, "I've found that you can at least do a lot to pacify animals, especially sheep, by talking to them as you fly overhead. It may sound ridiculous but it works."

The fact that ballooning is such an unpredictable pursuit causes many people to believe that it is unregulated. "That's not the case," says Money-Kytle. "A balloon pilot undergoes medical examinations just like any other pilot, along with written exams

in air law, meteorology, navigation and airframes. He is no less subject to the rules of the air than a jumbo pilot."

Britain's two principal manufacturers of balloons are Cameron Balloons in Bristol and Thunder and Colt. Between them, they build about 500 balloons a year, of which about 400 are exported.

"In terms of aircraft deliveries that makes us the two largest aircraft manufacturers in the country," says Colt marketing director Chris Kirby. With his company's turnover running at £3.2m last year, showing an £800,000 profit, it is clear that this apparently obscure enterprise is also one of the more profitable sectors of the aviation industry.

Per Lindstrom, the Swedish-born company managing director of Colt and Thunder, was mastermind and co-pilot of Richard Branson's celebrated transatlantic flight. He refers to it as nothing more than "thirty-two hours of sitting in a tin can."

This penchant for understatement is reflected in company policy. "We never make anything

Sky-high prospects:
Alexander Norman
explains why hot air
ballooning is
increasingly popular
both as a sport and
as an advertising
medium

unless we have sold it first," he explains. "That way we can't go far wrong even though sometimes we might go a bit wrong."

The philosophy is extended even to new projects. The entire first batch of eight miniature airships now being built has already been sold. Likewise, the three conventional airships that the company is building for Wren Skyservice represent a simple sub-contracting arrangement.

Although rendered somewhat unfashionable by several extremely public disasters between the wars, airships are making a comeback. Alan Bond's Airstrip Industries has become a household name. So given the crossover in technology, it is unsurprising to learn that Thunder and Colt is moving in this direction. "We shall not move away from balloon manufacture, but airships represent a new avenue for us to explore. They are certainly the way forward for advertisers," says Lindstrom.

Since the late 1970s, aerial advertising with balloons has grown from unpretentious beginnings to a multi-million pound industry. Originally, private owners sought nothing more than company sponsorship to help offset some of their operating costs.

Of course, it was not long before someone realised that this idea was the basis of something far greater than any casual agreement. With a working capital of precisely £500, Tessa Tennant and Colin Prescott set up the Hot Air Ballooning Company back in 1977. "Needless to say, everybody told us we were mad," recalls Tessa. Today, the company in the

UK has a turnover of £100,000 on a three-year contract. This should yield something like 150 flights, during which Habco aims to get maximum possible exposure by planing each flight as a media event.

Last year, the Alka Seltzer balloon was featured continuously for 16 minutes on the Late Late Breakfast Show. "A coup like that put us for the whole project in one go," maintains Lawrence.

Not all balloon advertising organisations are as large as Flying Pictures. Companies like James Money-Kytle's Sky High Balloons have far smaller portfolios than Habco's 38 craft (including three airships). Further down the scale are one-man, one-bal-

loon outfits, such as that of Peter Mason who is responsible for the Financial Times campaign. The advantage of his approach is total dedication to the one project.

(During the course of the centenary year a flying tour of Europe and two visits to the United States are planned, so he will be kept busy.)

Although there is no commercial balloon pilot's licence, the Civil Aviation Authority has plans to introduce one. This will enable operators to offer flights to fee-paying customers.

This represents a considerable new opportunity, especially since manufacturers have developed large passenger carrying models.

Money-Kytle plans to move into this market as soon as possible. "People are always asking for rides."

They see ballooning as an adventure - which it certainly is."

The degree of adventure can sometimes rise to unacceptable proportions, even though ballooning is not, at least statistically, a dangerous pursuit. Robin Batchelor, chief pilot at Flying Pictures and erstwhile instructor to Richard Branson, recalls a number of frantic incidents. "We landed in a hornet's nest in Brazil, suffered oxygen starvation flying over the Eiger and once only narrowly missed crash landing in the tiger pen at Bristol zoo." Ballooning is, he admits, something of an eccentric sport. A badge supplied by an American equipment supplier bears the legend "Don't tell my mother I'm a balloonist. She thinks I'm the piano player in a whorehouse."

Hutchinson suggests, might be a "relatively non-persistent insecticidal space spray," just in case.

The trouble, as Bill Simpson of MAPF points out, is that such an action could be illegal. The Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 makes it an offence to aim any insecticidal treatment at an unknown target species. If the insects are all in the mind, the pest controller cannot legally use an insecticide against them.

A squirt of deodorant spray can sometimes be the answer, but very occasionally, nothing seems to work. Fix the static, replace the spiky carpets, spray innocuous deodorant... and still the staff itch. Even the Environmental Health Officer could end up scratching his head. The culprit then could just be a mite belonging to the family Tyroglyphidae.

These live on microscopic

years that can grow on paper or cardboard, stored in the office.

When a person handles that paper, the mites may crawl onto the forearms. They are much too small to be seen or felt, but eventually they may make their presence known. The mite deposits tiny flecks on the person's skin,

and this can trigger an allergic reaction that takes the form of small raised swellings that itch like mad: bed bugs strike again.

To find the mites, the EHO presses sticky tape onto the surface of the skin, removes the glue and whatever it has picked up with a solvent, and looks for the mites under a microscope.

If they are present, one solution is to decrease the humidity.

That kills the yeasts on which the mites feed. But a dry office is a shocking office, and a shocking office can be an itchy office. Ah well, call the Environmental Health Officer.

Jeremy Cherfas

What price excellence?

Less than you might think with these superb wines chosen by the House of Cordier with Summer drinking in mind.

Ch. Talbot Blanc and Ch. Tanesse 1986, two crisp, dry classic Bordeaux whites, and Ch. Plagnac 1983, a light red from the Médoc full of fruit.

These three remarkably fine Bordeaux wines are available from most good wine merchants at surprisingly agreeable prices.

CORDIER
— one of the greatest names in Bordeaux

Wines of Westhorne — for more wine news

TOKAJI

Famed through the centuries "the King of wines and the wine of kings", Louis XIV, François I and Henry IV all drank Tokaji wine. The secret lies in the way the grapes are harvested. Later harvesting and the noble rot concentrate the sugar in the selected Aszú grapes. Aszú is made from the most select bunches of grapes. After the varietal before the grapes are pressed, 1, 2, or 5 measures of Aszú juice are then added to wine made from a strictly controlled range of grapes. Delicate and subtle, it is a wine of elegance. An open bottle can be consumed over a long period.

Tokaji Szamorodni Dry 1984 33.20
Aim to a sherry, for an aperitif.
Tokaji Szamorodni Sweet 1984 37.20
Tokaji Aszú 3 1982 45.20
Tokaji Aszú 4 1982 49.20
Tokaji Aszú 5 1982 53.20
Tokaji Eszencia 1976 234.20
Tokaji Eszencia 1957 440.20
TOKAJI CASE 42.90
3 each of the Szamorodni, 2 each of the Aszú's.
TOP TOKAJI CASE 94.90
1 of each Eszencia, 2 each of the other Tokaji wines.

Price includes VAT and delivery (UK mainland), £1.50 per bottle, £1.00 per case, under 5 cases freight £5 per order, 10+ cases free. £1.10 per case. Postage £1.20. Park Avenue Express, Sandon Park, Luton LU1 5AE. Tel: 0582 596040

that, with the help of two Masters of Wine and their spouses a dinner of 10-year-old class growths has been organised and reported here each year.

The dinner of the 1978 premiers crus was held recently, and for the first time there were eight rather than seven wines to consider, for after a period when the wines of Ausone were not judged of first-growth quality, although in the 1955 St-Emilion classification it was paired only with Cheval-Blanc, it is generally believed that with the 1978 vintage the wine had returned to form.

We looked forward to this year for in the last four years we had dealt with the non-charming 1974s, the very closed 1975s, opening prices rose substantially. The first growths that had been around Fr 50,000 (Fr 54,000 a tonneau, 100 dozen bottles) since 1975 rose to Fr 32,000, and Latour to Fr 50,000.

The wines were decanted immediately before the dinner, and after being poured sufficient was left to refresh the glasses 1½ hours later and before the voting was taken. They were served in the usual order, with Ausone inserted before Haut-Brion and four Médocs and before Cheval-Blanc and Petrus.

The notes were all made at the table, my own first, with an occasional word added but the sense not amended, and then distinctive comments of the others. Broadly, there was little difference of opinion.

Haut-Brion Good colour for a

10-year-old wine, but lighter rim. Initially a rather austere, Graves nose, but this opened up in the glass. Strong, fruity flavour, distinguished but not all that long.

Other comments included "big

wine, but not enormous finish"; "tobacco nose and palate"; "very good colour, bricky nose".

Margaux Much more colour

than Haut-Brion. Very closed bouquet. Edgy, peppery, bitter flavour. Lacks fruit and extract; "Noise slow to develop, fragrant; flavour fulsome, dry, very tannin"; "extraordinarily youthful, purple colour; lots of extract, cassis underneath, not at its most attractive now, very chunky, the opposite of flattening"; "bouquet came through after 20 minutes"; "dry, closed, rather bitter".

Lafite Full colour, fine elegant

nose and distinguished flavour, with plenty behind it, but on being refreshed nearly two hours after decanting had lost some body. "Fairly deep colour, well developed fragrance; rose petal"; "aromatic, quite evolved nose, notably acid but well integrated"; "less deep colour than Margaux, nice cabernet nose"; "good length, blackcurrant pastilles"; "charming, but later not so good".

Mouton-Rothschild Very big

colour, very closed bouquet. Quite strong aggressive taste, but lacks distinction. Later the nose much more obvious but taste still dull. "Rather simple on the palate"; "still youthful, crisp but not the usual cabernet-sauvignon fruitiness"; "sweet at the beginning of the taste, but acid at the end"; "noise improved in the glass"; "slight medicinal taste".

Latour Very big colour, full Pauillac nose. Rich fruity wine, not ready yet, but less backward than usual with Lafite, drinkable. "Classic claret and classic

Pauillac nose. Gorgeous ripe fruit, with great concentration"; "lovely fruit, touch of bitter tanin"; "powerful wine, enjoyable now, but will give lots of pleasure in the future".

Ausone Very big colour, chocolate nose. Big, round well-balanced wine, still needs time to develop, with much behind it; will keep. "Fairly deep, lively, attractive colour; medium full body, dry finish"; "lively, very attractive confectionary smell, has a lot to give; needs time".

Cheval-Blanc Full colour, the bouquet initially less rich than expected, but the flavour more full, which comes out of the glass; sweet; a very engaging wine. "Colour beginning to mature, herbaceous, medium-full body, lovely texture"; "more layers of taste than Ausone"; "sweet, flavours goes on and on".

Petrus Big colour, nose good

but not as rich as expected. Taste

of the vintage turned out much larger than forecast, and there were those who thought that the bad summer had resulted in a lack of backbone in the wine. But generally it was very favourably received and for the first time since the slump in 1973, opening prices rose substantially. The first growths that had been around Fr 50,000 (Fr 54,000 a tonneau, 100 dozen bottles) since 1975 rose to Fr 32,000, and Latour to Fr 50,000.

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All were surprised and disappointed that Margaux had not shown better, because it was, after many disappointing years, the first vintage made for André Mérillouopoulos, who had bought the chateau in the previous year and had at once set to work to improve every aspect of the estate. Most of the party had tasted the 1978 at the chateau from time to time and found it good. However, the bottle opened had come straight from the chateau soon after it was bottled, had been well cellarled and seemed typical. Maybe the wine is just very backward, and needs more time.

Wine/Edmund Penning-Rowse

Time to test the 1978 clarets

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DIVERSIONS

If you want to get ahead get a hat

IF YOU are in search of a proper chapeau with which to broach the social season I'd better give you the bad news first. One word is all it takes - price. It looks neat enough on the printed page but it can make a nasty mess of the bank statement. Though indubitably pretty straws can be bought for under £50 (and I found one really quite stylish one at Harrods for £17) if what you are looking for is a designer hat then anything from £100 to £500 is the price you should expect to pay for a name like Philip Somerville, Graham Smith or Royal hatter Freddy Fox.

A designer hat, in case you wondered, is a numero by a "name", which not only lends a certain confidence to those who need it but also offers the certainty that you won't run into your best friend at Ascot sporting exactly the same little confection.

The good news is that hats are back. Milliners are flourishing as never before - in department stores, in their own *ateliers* and in the chain stores. No longer is wearing a hat an impossibly grand statement, only ventured by the brave. Though you wouldn't (would you?) wear the same hat to Ascot that you'd don for a saunter down to Sainsbury's, somewhere there lies a hat that would suit the moment.

My views on hats remain unchanged. The sole *raison d'être* for all those bits of straw and tulle is to make you look beautiful, to provide a delicate friseon of mystery and deliciousness and if a hat that doesn't do that, don't buy it.

Douglas Sutherland, always

rewarding to consult on matters social, has this to say about the role of the chapeau in the English Gentleman's Wife's Wardrobe.

"Particular notice

should be drawn to hats. Hats,

for ladies, have a curiously uplifting quality. She has to have new ones frequently for such occasions as Ascot, Wimbledon, family weddings and the like; these can then be pensioned off for going to church in. Could it be that in a beautiful hat, and with the family jewels on, no one will notice what else the Lady wears?"

To get your eye in on the new season's millinery delights you could hardly do better than take in the offerings of a good hat department. Harrods hat department is sadly depleted in square footage, but hats of every name and mood are still to be found. The days when customers came to them for a wardrobe full of grand occasion hats may have passed, but there is still plenty of variety. Biggest selling designer names are Philip Somerville, Graham Smith (famous for the quality of his fine, fine part-bunited straw) and Freddy Fox (this year he has produced some stunningly sophisticated little numbers, all magic and coquetry).

Still highly sought after for her magical way of making straw seem almost butter-soft is Patricia Underwood. She it was who produced the hat that almost every fashion editor in town was to be seen wearing a couple of summers back. With a wide, wide brim that drooped sweetly, just like a wilting rose, it was the hat noticed a Stephen Jones hat

is still flopping beguilingly but in more sophisticated shapes and colours. See most of her collection at Browns of 27 South Molton Street, London W1.

Vivien Knowland is yet another name to look for. She is the master of shape and while her styles are neither very innovative nor avant-garde, they nearly always flatter. They are good value, too, at prices that start at £30 and go up to about £150. Find her designs at Harvey Nichols, Fenwick and other good stores up and down the country.

Avant-garde hatter of the year is, of course, the shaven-headed Stephen Jones. If you like to be noticed a Stephen Jones hat

should do the trick, though in his latest collection for House of Fraser stores there are some more conventional-looking numbers. Prices are good, too, all House of Fraser design are under £20.

Over at Frederick Fox, of 87-91 New Bond Street, London W1, where posse of royals, clutches of aristocrats and battalions of the rich and famous regularly shop, black, it seems, is the colour of the moment. All those fashionably vibrant colours need the strength and subtlety of black as a contrast. Customers

may order anything from one to 10 hats at a time - my dear, one

never ever wears the same hat

two days running to Ascot, that

would be very *steak chapeau*.

His prices range from £200 to £400

and his ineffably elegant crea-

tions can be found in quite a few department stores as well as in his own *atelier*.

Prices start at about £200 and go up to £400.

If those prices seem fancy

they're worse to come. At David Shilling's showroom-come-work-

shop at 44 Chiltern Street, Lon-

don W1 you're talking bigger

money still. £300 - £5,000 is what

his customers can expect to pay

for retiring souls.

If all these prices seem like

utter madness, take heart. Laura

Ashley has some charming na-

tural straw hats, a good cloche

shape among others, which can

be dressed up or down. The Hat

Shop, 58 Neal Street, London

WC2 is the shop that has done

most to persuade a new genera-

tion that wearing a hat is a Good

Thing. Their down-to-earth

prices, their jaunty styles, their

air of youthful enthusiasm have

turned a hat into a witty per-

sonal prop and not just a grand

occasional statement. For those

who can't afford designer prices,

The Hat Shop is the place to go

- they'll trim and refit so you

can change the look, the mood

and the colour. Nothing gives

a cheap hat more than the

trimmings so if you can't afford

the best, keep it simple.

If you want something fun, spe-

cial and not too conventional, it

is worth looking at what the

group of young designers at

Hyper Hyper in London's Ken-

sington High Street are up to

(after all, that is where Karl Lag-

erfeld came upon the young Kir-

sten Woodward, now highly

sought-after by couturiers

and the smart-set).

5. Cap for all seasons in salt

n' pepper tweed, £25.50, Bates.

6. The "Sherlock" £32.50,

Herbert Johnson.

7. Kangol beret, rainbow range,

£2.25, The Hat Shop.

8. Smoking cap, several dusky

shades, velvet, moire silk £39.50,

Herbert Johnson.

9. Woolen green and black

lumbercheck cap £14.50, The Hat

shop.

THE SHOPS

Bates, 21a Jermyn Street, London

SW1. A snug little shop,

crammed with happy headwear

- contented columns of checked

and speckled caps, glazed shelves

of slumbering hats, the window a mélée of fur, felt and tweed.

Herbert Johnson, 30 New Bond Street, London W1. Most

fashionable and expensive of hats.

An amazing variety (ask Elton John) including Great Waldo Pepper leather flying helmets (£59.50) and Kelly green Trilbies for St Patrick's Day

patriots at Cheltenham. Just moved to new airy premises

where you can practice jaunty airs and rakish dapper, waggish stafe and a women's department, too.

When the sun shines there

are straw boaters for Henley or

Eton; glamorous Panamas for

Glorious Goodwood in July and

Cowes in August; linen caps and

cotton hats for cricket and

tennis; and brimmy Montego

straws like the ones dear old Cecil Beaton used to wear.

James Lock, 6 St James's St, London SW1, a very august establishment which has been

hatted since 1676. A

comprehensive range of fine hats

including the bowler, named a

"Coke" in honour of the first

man to wear one. A curio they

still stock is a flat-topped bowler

or "cheerer" as once worn by

Winston Churchill (75).

The Hat Shop, 9 Geen Court, St Christopher Place, London

W1. Inexpensive, interesting,

some cardbord stuff (but

cheap), some good quality

Christy's hats.

Hackett, 66c New Kings road,

London SW6. Always worth a

visit in case a second-hand gem

turns up. Old hat boxes plus new

Christy's Trilbies.

Dunn & Co. Found dead centre

of almost every town. Middling,

workaday, reliable range.

James Ferguson



Food for Thought/Peter Fort

O tempura! O mores!

It shows, when it comes to those two pastimes, at least, that the Japanese are much like the rest of us. I know who the rich gourmet gourmet reminds me of. I quite understand *Tampopo*'s obsession. But I won't reveal, even to my nearest and dearest, with whom I identify. It's all a jolly and civilised correction to the Clive James School of Oriental Studies.

That says much for the international nature of food and eating. *Tampopo* is about a widow's progress to becoming the noodle queen of whatever nameless city in which the action is set. She is aided in her trials by a number of unlikely figures - a truck driver who bears an uncanny resemblance to Chief Sitting Bull, and his sidekick; a professor who lives among down and outs, inspiring them to higher planes of gastronomy; and the chef/chefeur of a rich, gourmand gourmet, whose life is saved by our heroine when she clears something stuck in his throat by using a vacuum cleaner in a somewhat unorthodox way.

I won't outline the full plot, because there isn't one really. It's a discursive, episodic and amusing ramble around human attitudes to cooking and eating, and

out that Japan has one of the highest levels of bowel disorders in the world. The national addiction to fibrous, glutinous rice for breakfast, lunch and tea costs them dear, and no doubt accounts for their passion for regular lavatory visits.

Indeed, the state of their bowel health is a national preoccupation. They talk about them in much the same way that the British talk about the weather. So, before you become addicted to sushi and sashimi, miso and yakitori - beware. Not, I think that you are likely to in the UK, excellent though much of the food is. For one thing, such delicacy and lightness of cooking so different from our own, delicate, deceptively simple, decorative with an emphasis on high quality, fresh ingredients. But before we get too carried away I should point out that Japanese food has its drawbacks.

Leaving aside for a moment the annual death toll among Fugu (a kind of puffer fish) eaters, I think it is worth pointing out that Japanese food has its drawbacks. Leaving aside for a moment the annual death toll among Fugu (a kind of puffer fish) eaters, I think it is worth pointing

out that what you might call generalists, their sushi (raw seafood with rice) may be better than their sashimi (just raw fish) and their tempura (bits and pieces deep fried in very light batter) better than their yakitori (grilled chicken), but you'll probably get a choice of at least three of them, or other delicacies come to that.

Not so in the shadow of Mount Fuji. I believe you do find generalists there, it's true, but much more frequently, apparently. Sad to say, the sushi begin to deteriorate as balance between delicacy of flavour and form. Naturally, it takes a lot of hard work to achieve this kind of artless perfection. According to the proprietor, Mr Yoshihara, it takes five years to become a fully trained sushi chef and ten years before you become a master. It's easier to become a brain surgeon.

The natural consequence of

this specialisation is that you get

an exceptional level of expertise in preparing the specific range of dishes, and the maintenance of very high standards of presentation. I think Japanese food has more than a whiff of ritual formalism about it.

At the seemingly minimalist Wakaba on the Finchley Road (actually designed by a fashionable Westerner), the food, especially the sushi, begin to deteriorate as balance between delicacy of flavour and form. Naturally, it takes a lot of hard work to achieve this kind of artless perfection. According to the proprietor, Mr Yoshihara, it takes five years to become a fully trained sushi chef and ten years before you become a master. It's easier to become a brain surgeon.

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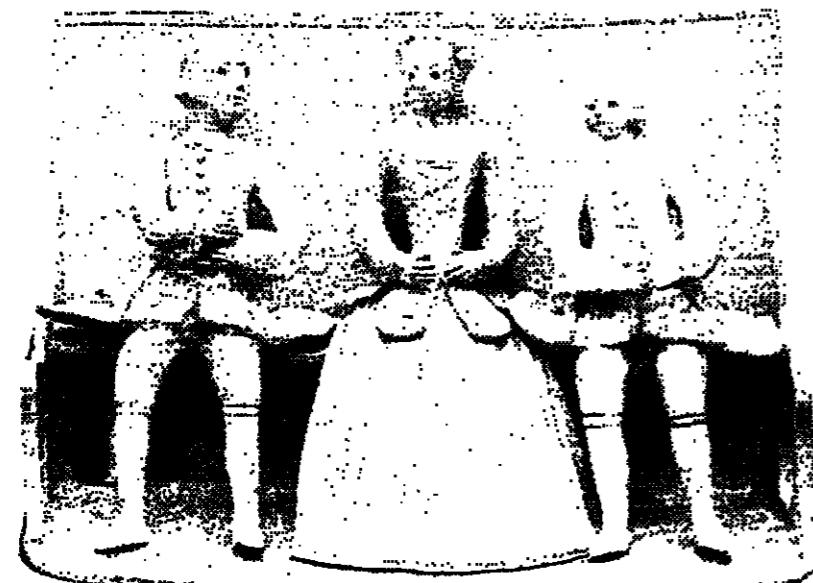
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DIVERSIONS

Janet Marsh looks at Staffordshire ceramics



Staffordshire white saltglaze pew group, of about 1745

Take a pew, folks

THE RECORD price for a single example of British ceramics was established two years ago when an American collector paid £102,000 for a Staffordshire salt-glaze pew group from the Rous Lench collection.

This was an object more quaint and comic than conventionally beautiful, with something of the spirit of a child's elaborate effort in Plasticine. It represented two little men of pipe-cleaner physique seated side by side on a settle, playing horns. Their eyes and the buttons of their coats were picked out in brown clay on white, rather like the currants on gingerbread men.

Pew groups of this kind form a very distinctive class and appear to be among the earliest forms of chimney ornaments made by the Staffordshire potters. They are extremely rare; at most, a score of authentic examples are known, and the Rous Lench group was only the fourth to appear at auction since the Second World War. Thus, it is notable that two more have surfaced so soon afterwards and will be sold by Sotheby's in London on Tuesday, June 14.

The appearance of these groups — so similar that, almost certainly, they have stayed together since they were made — might seem almost too good to be true. But thermo-luminescent testing establishes beyond doubt that they cannot have been produced later than the mid-18th century.

For objects that command such high prices, surprisingly little is known about these groups. Pottery manufacture early in the 18th century still was a peasant craft. The potters were humble men, working for humble customers, and unconcerned to leave any traces for posterity beyond brief entries in parish records.

The surviving pew groups all appear to date from the 1740s, and almost all are made of the fine, white, salt-glazed pottery perfected in Staffordshire shortly before that date. The artlessness of the modelling is not unconscious. These figures undoubtedly were conceived in a spirit of caricature to amuse and entertain their owners.

The term 'pew group' seems something of a misnomer: the seats on which the figures sit look much more like settles or ale-benches. In some examples, the back of the seat is decorated with grotesque masks; in others,

with fretted designs of hearts. The occupants generally are either musicians or a trio representing a young lady seated between two rivel suitors.

Traditionally, it was supposed that all these pew groups were the work of one potter, Aaron Wood, a progenitor of the famous pottery family who was credited by tradition with a whimsical sense of humour. However, the two new groups are so different in style, both from the Rous Lench group and from the solitary example in the British Museum, as to indicate that they cannot have been the work of the same potter.

While the Rous Lench group clearly was modelled entirely by hand, the newly-discovered groups are made up of moulded elements in the manner of porcelain figurines. In each group, the limbs and bodies of the last and their escorts are identical. There are, however, variations of posture, and in one group, the lady carries a pet dog while the man plays a pipe.

Sotheby's has made an estimate of £40,000-50,000, but, with the combination of two groups being sold together, it would be very difficult to guess whether these rare items will surpass the Rous Lench record.

The pew groups tend slightly to overshadow a number of other outstanding items in a sale of exceptional quality. There is an amusing variation on a well-known Whieldon group of a water buffalo, based on a Chinese original and found normally with an Oriental figure on the animal's back. In this case, though, the startled creature is ridden by a precariously-balanced European figure (estimate £15,000-12,000).

A Southwark delftware charger of a fluted form unrecorded in English delftware of the period, with the arms of the Vintners Company and dated 1650, is likely to realise £30,000-40,000; and a della-chiara of circa 1665 with the portraits of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza, is estimated at £20,000-30,000.

There is also an impressive group of 17th century English slipware, including a press-moulded dish with an equestrian portrait of George I (£35,000-50,000); and an unrecorded portrait charger showing William III in a dramatically stylised pose waving sword and sceptre aloft

(£20,000-40,000).

For the more modest investor, there is an interesting group of medieval pottery from the Pitt-Rivers Museum, including two sturdy earthenware watering pots rated technically as "medieval" although dating from the 16th to 17th centuries (estimate £800-1,200 each).

June 14 is, in fact, quite a field day for the collector of fine English pottery. In an evening sale, Christie's will sell the Price-Glover collection, a good cross section of 17th and 18th century wares.

Here, the star items include a fine salt-glaze bowl from the same period as the pew groups, depicting on its sides the Seven Champions of Christendom.

Whistles damaged and repaired, it is estimated at £6,000-8,000.

The Price-Glover delftware includes a London portrait plaque of Queen Anne dated 1704 (£12,000-20,000). A group of lead-glazed figures in characteristic Whistle swirls underglaze colouring includes a charming cat (£8,000-12,000), a leveller (£6,000-10,000), and a rare figure supposed to represent the celebrated actor Colley Cibber (£15,000-20,000).

LE CIRQUE Imaginaire, which opens on Tuesday for a limited season at the Mermaid Theatre, could not have arrived in London at a more appropriate time. A succession of circus acts and variety turns presented singly and together by its two founders, combining the philosophy of "small is beautiful" with a heartfelt plea for sheer talent at its most glowing and spine-tingling.

The contrast between, on the one hand, the circus dream-become-reality of Victoria Chaplin (third daughter of the cinema legend) and Jean-Baptiste Thierree and, on the other, the Moscow State Circus, now set securely upon a tour of the British provinces after heightened media acclaim at Battersea Park in south London, could not be more striking.

Media hyperbole has produced the fallacy that the only great circus left in the world is that produced by the state-controlled gymnastic machine of the USSR. This is not so. In mainland Europe, unlike the UK, the circus is still an entertainment to which a television producer like myself can take colleagues less knowledgeable in this area with pride rather than embarrassment.

The greatest conventional circus in the world is actually Circus Knie in Switzerland. The Knie dynasty is regarded by the public there as the nearest equivalent of a Swiss royal family, such are the standards it has set with animals, human performers and production values.

During childhood, Chaplin would be escorted by her parents to see Circus Knie whenever it visited Vevey, the family home on Lake Geneva. For all its grandeur, the greatest impression must have been made, as today, by its style, intimacy and the warmth of its personal touch.

Her meeting with Thierree, an aspiring clown with sawdust already in his shoes, was heaven-sent. Two years later, in 1971, they inaugurated Le Cirque Imaginaire, then called Le Cirque Bourgogne, at the Avignon Festival with an ensemble of more than 30 acrobats and clowns not to mention lions, tigers and elephants.

Over the years, they have distilled everything of value in the European circus scene and adapted the result to their own personal vision. The result is an evening of poetry and surprises as bewitching as any I have ever seen in the theatre. They are now their own ringmaster, orchestra and corps de ballet, their only assistance a small domestic menagerie of ducks, doves and a rabbit.

The wild-haired Thierree is an endearing clown with a guileless charm and an eccentric approach to prestidigitation. The magic in his world transcends the conventional cabinet of wonders. His best moments are incidental ones, as when he bursts a bubble with a hammer to produce a surprising

freshness in so many disciplines, is dazzling. At one moment she is a person band cajoling tunes from an ingenious cast of many noises — bells and clangers, rattles and bones; at another she resembles an Elvira Madigan for the Eighties, exploiting danger and sensuality as she treads the silver wire.

She produces an audible gasp as she soars out over the heads of the audience, looped precariously to the most insecure of rope swings. Then, she uses a total kaleidoscope of fans and umbrellas to transform herself into the most colourful catalogue of exotic beasts and extra-terrestrial characters imaginable.

Chaplin acts as the perfect counterbalance to her husband, her symbolic magic enhancing his literal hocus-pocus. The world of the stage illusionist has always been opposed diametrically to that of the true circus performer. Both set out to achieve the impossible.

But while the conjuror defies gravity, say, by resorting to ingenuity, deception and applied psychology, the trapeze artist does the same through innate physical strength, skill and daring. It is good that in the artistic marriage of the inspired Thierree and the daughter of history's most famous clown, these two wonderful worlds have achieved a unique harmony.

This, the first London visit of Le Cirque Imaginaire in six years, will sadly be the last. After seasons in New York, Tokyo and Los Angeles, Chaplin and Thierree are committed to conquering new artistic horizons. Partake of their dream, while you can, and discover the true magic of circus.

The circus where dreams are real

Grab this last chance to see it, urges John Fisher



Thierree endearing clown with a guileless charm

metallic ring, does a 360-degree turn of head and upper torso while his feet stay planted on the ground, or blows up his bony rabbit with an air pump as if it were the most natural thing in the world to do.

Interspersed between his own escapades are the stunning set-pieces Chaplin has made her own. That one person should have achieved not only perfection, but such an invigorating

freshness and grace in so many disciplines, is dazzling.

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William St Clair looks at an old and exclusive club

THE THIRD Duke of Roxburghe is said to have put prudence before love. When his wish to marry the sister of the Queen of England was opposed by both families, he signed and obeyed. Later, as Lord of the Bedchamber and Groom of the Stole at the court of George III, he had opportunity to see what he was missing, but he remained a bachelor.

In the saloon, however, he was bolder. Having arranged for a friend to kid out his behalf for a first folio Shakespeare, he lounged at the back of the room to watch the proceedings. When the bidding reached 20 guineas, the friend passed him a note asking if he should go on. The Duke took out his pencil and, like a general on the battlefield, calmly wrote: "Lay on, Macduff! And damned be he who first cries hold, enough!" The book was secured for 35 guineas, an unprecedented price for an English book in those days.

But the Duke of Roxburghe's greatest day occurred on June 12, 1812, eight years after his death, when his own library came under the hammer. Among his collection was a copy of Boccaccio

printed by Valdarfer in 1471, believed to be unique, at any rate in England, in its complete state. The bidding began at 100 guineas, the price which Roxburghe paid in the 1730s, and soon developed into a contest between the Marquis of Blandford, heir to the Duke of Marlborough, and Earl Spencer. When there was a moment's silence at 2,000 guineas, Spencer was seen to confer with his heir, Lord Althorp, before attempting a knockout blow by bidding £2,250. But such tactics are usually a mistake, at any rate if you sincerely want to buy. Blandford quietly repeated his usual bid, "And ten," and obtained the book.

That evening a group of noblemen dined together to celebrate. They enjoyed themselves so much that they decided to make the dinner a regular event. The Roxburghe Club has been going ever since, probably the oldest book club in the world and certainly one of the most unusual. A menu of 1818 lists the eleven types of wine and the bill for £28 for 15 members, including broken glass. A total of 11 toasts were drunk to the memory of the early printers. The final call was "the cause of bibliomania all over the world."

They had much to celebrate. By 1812 it was clear that the English nobility were not going the way of their French cousins. Sir Walter Scott was a member, although he did not attend.

The Earl of Normanby was a member of the York Gossips, bringing the number of Roxburghe Club books to nearly 250. Written in Latin in Anglo-Saxon times, the manuscript has been at York since 1020 and is still used for swearing oaths at the Minster. There are no pictures and few people will read it for the story, although, as an example of the calligraphy of its time, it is admired.

More interesting are the later additions in Old English, which give details of some of the estates in Yorkshire owned or claimed by the Church during its early expansion. A sacred book conferred legitimacy — or at least ensured continuity — for records of worldly matters written in its margins. Also included are transcriptions of a few sermons and a public letter from King Canute on his recent visit to Denmark; it makes no mention of giving orders to the tides, the only episode for which he is now remembered.

Since 1838 the club has consisted of 36 members. Some have inherited their libraries, others have accumulated them, and there are experts who know about the details. Lord Powis joined at 21. John Pierpoint Morgan had to wait until he was 75.

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ARTS

Michael Coveney reports from Dublin as the city celebrates its millenium

A romp through a Restoration rarity

THE ABBEY Theatre in Dublin has dug up its own local Restoration comedy for the city's millennium celebrations. *St Stephen's Green* by William Phillips is a piece of much curiosity value, dating from the same year, 1700, as *The Way of the World*, and first (and last) performed at the Smock Alley, Ireland's first new theatre after the Restoration (the first, in fact, in all our islands) and prime cause of the Dublin theatre-going had.

All trace of the Smock Alley is lost beneath a square grey 19th century church on the other side of the Liffey in the Castle district. Phillips' play has been consigned to a similar oblivion, but a new edition by Christopher Murray was published in 1980 without raising much of a stir. I am the first member, it appears, to have borrowed the London Library copy.

The director Leon Rubin has used this version for his Abbey revival, adding his own rhyming epilogue and transposing half of act three to the second scene. The ingredients are stock elements of a genre with which Dublin audiences of the time were familiar:

The Country Wife had been given in the Smock Alley, and all three Etheridge comedies had been staged in 1688. Unlike Congreve and his fellow Derryman George Farquhar, Phillips wrote for the Irish stage rather than London advancement.

He has two pairs of temporarily thwarted lovers, an epicene fop in the Foppling Fluffer mould, a randy father figure and a trick to catch the old one. But in setting the action for the most part on St Stephen's Green, rather than St James's Park or Pall Mall, Phillips was bringing an Irish stage speciality.

back home. Little is known of him — he was very probably an army captain and almost certainly a politician in the Irish parliament. But he was the first Irish topographical dramatist and, in that respect, the nominal founder of the Irish drama.

"Crossing Stephens, that is, is green" reads the inscription on Joyce's statue in that still pleasant oasis of shrubbery and manicured lawns. The Phillips characters, too, have their homes there, but Leon Rubin's production is not slavish in its representation. Joe Venzek has designed a cycloramic engraving of the 18th century cityscape, an indication that period style rather than detailed realism is the object of the exercise. I think this is a mistake. Many of Phillips's specific historical references — to the political life, to the condition of Dublin as a heavily garrisoned city at this time — are cut or glossed over.

The result is an exercise in vacuous charm, an indulgence the text, much of it dull and most of it undistinguished, simply cannot support. The conventions of Restoration comedy, spiced by the dramatist, are spiced too by the Abbey actors. Des Keogh is a fluttering Vaudy who soon exchanges all semblance of vigorous outrage for a bad Stanley Baxter imitation and a plethora of feeble interjections of his own. Godfrey Quigley stamps around pulling faces as Sir Francis Feignyouth, unable or unwilling to countenance the role's ingrained money-grubbing lechery.

Quite a reasonable debate is joined on the mercenary aspects of marriage, news of legacies and dowries suppressed for the sake of testing true love. But finance in the family is also,



Des Keogh and Des Cave in William Phillips' "St Stephen's Green" at the Abbey Theatre

as readers of this newspaper will appreciate, a matter of hard practicality, and Phillips does manage to express a wider spectrum of views than do some of his more gifted literary peers.

Here are Lady Wishfort or Margery Pinchwife, but the scheming old Lady Volant and the amorous cousins Aemilia and Marina are given some vivacious colouring by Maire O'Neill, Gabrielle Reidy and Maria McDermott.

The latter pair do well at playing off their suitor behind held masks on the green. Not enough is made of the contrast between the beaux Freelove drama, is here aired for the first time in such remarks, and in the heartfelt reflection that "none despise Ireland so much as those who thrive best in it."

Phillips does not leave much to be filled out, admittedly, but there is a sense of these two men being transformed by love. And Bellmire is a rake confined by playing at home: "In London, 'tis difficult to know; here, impossible to be concealed". The Irishman's ambivalent parochialism, a rich vein of so much subsequent Irish

writing, is here aired for the first time in such remarks, and in the heartfelt reflection that "none despise Ireland so much as those who thrive best in it."

The Abbey has provided handsome black costumes, an irritating superfluous little dog (I suppose the American tourists who were bussed in to Thursday night's loose and sloppy performance had to relate to something) and some pretty harp and keyboard music by Loreena McKennitt. I am glad to have seen the play, but do not expect to do so again. It continues at the Abbey until June 25.

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WEEKEND FT

SPORT

Cricket/Teresa McLean

Self-critical leader inspires his side

MIDDLESEX IS a difficult cricket county to write about because it doesn't feel like a county. It feels like north-of-the-river London, the traditional enemy of south-of-the-river Surrey, but if it doesn't have Surrey's outvillage to give its game a touch of the countryside.

Middlesex is, and always has been, an urban team and as far as I can see, none of its members has any sense of county identity at all. I suppose that might be partly because Middlesex the county no longer exists. But other cricketing counties have survived the outrages of the Boundary Commission with their integrity intact.

Yorkshire is as full of county nationalism today as it was before it became Humberdale, Cleveland, North, south and West Yorkshire and a bit of Cumbria. Middlesex, by contrast, has strong team spirit but its young players all agree that county spirit is non-existent.

In the north they would be lucky to get away alive if they said that Yorkshire has a cherished belief in itself as a race apart and to this day only allows Yorkshiremen to play in its cricket team. Its neighbour, Lancashire, imports and exports players as much as everyone else but is proudly county-minded.

The Roses Match is an ancient bloodbath, less popular now than it used to be but still fought with passionate intensity.

Part of the force of this feeling in the North comes from the powerful sometimes fanatical awareness of being north country. In Middlesex you would be sent away for treatment if you held forth about the glories of being a south country lad. Even the southern equivalent of the Roses Match, the game between Middlesex and Surrey, is no longer the local derby it used to be. Nowadays the Middlesex players prefer the game against Essex because it is always a good, competitive fixture.

"The team really gets itself together against Essex," they told me. When I pointed out that Essex is the only county to have won a county championship match against Middlesex this

year, they regarded this as helping to prove their point. "Essex is becoming our favourite enemy, like Surrey used to be."

Antipathy, like loyalty, is a free-range affair at Middlesex. Even in the early years of the century, when county loyalty everywhere was fierce and most county players were local recruits, Middlesex transcended not just county but national boundaries with the nonchalance befitting a cosmopolitan capital city.

"Pum" Warner, who was the amateur captain and hero of Middlesex for most of the decade 1910-20, was born in the West Indies. At the time Middlesex boasted a wide variety of birthplaces for its players, including

produced results this time when similar sessions in the past and in other counties have not. The answer is Gatting. He is a self-critical leader who inspires his team by tearing himself to pieces in front of them, then going off to the nets to start work on correcting his faults. Middlesex has nine First XI players aged 25 or under, some part-time, some full-time, all responsive to this style of leadership from the front.

That is why the departure of Edmonds has raised morale. An ambitious extrovert with a high public profile, he was not easily absorbed into the keen camp atmosphere that Gatting was trying to create. Relieved of his presence, and of Radley's painfully pedestrian influence suffocating all before it, the young Middlesex contingent now seems happier and more optimistic.

Optimism is a useful virtue to have at Middlesex. It has always been a team famous for not working. Right up until the 1980 Middlesex had five or six amateurs. A generation later, when Compton celebrated post-war euphoria in 1947 by scoring 2,467 runs with light-hearted grace, practicing before playing was still an offence against good taste.

The hard-boiled realism of modern cricket has only been partly successful in changing this. Some of the older players continue to trust form more than work and are renowned on the county circuit for turning up to games at the last minute and having a cup of tea instead of a work-out in the nets before play. This year they are not doing badly on it.

There is a distinctly ad hoc quality about Middlesex's cricket at the moment. Preparation beforehand, although increasingly popular with the younger recruits, is less important than dynamism on the field. It being generally agreed that a game is won or lost on the field of play where, they assured me, you really get plugged in.

I struggled with the image of Gatting plugging himself in. It was explained to me that the plugging consisted of shouting encouragement and advice to his



Meat of the man, meat of the bat: Mike Gatting

team all the time. Downton consolidates this with his own supply of chatter, clapping and little nuggets of enthusiasm. "We are the noisiest team in the game," says Hughes proudly.

Off the field they are quiet and give the impression of being rather surprised by their current success. One possible reason for it, they suggested, might be the appearance this year of a good bowling attack. If one had to generalise, I think it would be fair to say that Middlesex's moments of greatest glory have usually been with the bat. Warner and Compton spring immediately to mind and today Gatting leads from the batting crease as Brearley did before him.

I would like to think that they could unplug themselves as easily as they plug themselves in.

An exceptional number of Gatting's troops can turn an arm if need be — Tufnell and Needham and, on occasion, Sykes and Carr, provide spin support for Emburey, while Fraser, Hughes and Williams make a sharp, medium-paced follow-up to Cowans and Daniels, who have been plagued with injury.

With the Lord's wickets looking kinder to bowlers than they have done for years, the only reason for Middlesex's nervous attitude to the rest of the season is the absence of their captain and vice-captain, Gatting and Emburey, during Test matches. It will be interesting to see if they have the resources, backing, bowling and psychological reserves to handle that.

As a life-long Surrey supporter I would like to think that they could unplug themselves as easily as she does in today's final.

There were moments in her semi-final on Thursday against

Tennis/John Barrett

Youthful aspiration fills the Paris air

NOT FOR years has there been a French Championship so full of youthful promise as this year's meeting which ends this weekend in the leafy splendour of the Stade Roland Garros in Paris. With a succession of spectacular upsets throughout its rain-washed progress, the current version of these unofficial world court championships could be subtitled the March of Youth.

When Steffi Graf won the title here at the age of 17 years 11 months, we all saluted the youngest ever winner, so it is extraordinary to think that the three youngsters who joined the holder in the semi-finals this year were all younger than the West German, now almost 19.

There certainly seems to be something in the Paris air this spring. When last Friday the delightful little Spanish No.1, 16-year-old Arantxa Sanchez, beat seven-times former champion Chris Evert, it was a signal for all the young players in the draw to believe that miracles were possible.

Certainly the 17-year-old Russian girl, Natalia Zvereva, who had won the junior tournament here last year (she later added the Wimbledon and US Open junior titles), played with great conviction when surprising the No.2 seed, Martina Navratilova, with the variety of her backcourt game.

After beating the former world champion in straight sets, Zvereva in No.3 seed, seemed to grow about two inches. The momentum of that victory carried the young Russian past sixth-seeded Helena Sukova in the last quarter final, played late on Tuesday.

This tense and highly contested 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 victory was completed only just in time for Zvereva to rush to the world champions' dinner where, as the new world junior champion, she stood beside Graf and made a brief but dignified speech in English. Well as she was playing, I doubt if this self-possessed young lady believed that four days later she would be meeting Graf again — on court this time — as she does in today's final.

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So it proved. Graf, though ner-

vous and less consistent than she had been previously, played the big points well to score an impressive 6-3, 7-6 win that took her to a fifth successive major championship final. The winner of the Australian Open last January, Graf is now on the second leg of the elusive Grand Slam, last scored in the same year by Margaret Court in 1970.

Promising as she undoubtedly is, it is inconceivable that Zvereva will be good enough to prevent that progress, and I shall be astonished if she fails the German juggernaut today.

How excellent for the health of the world game that the strong young men, too, have imposed themselves. On the face of it the defeat of Ivan Lendl on Thursday by the 21-year-old Swede Jonas Svensson, was due largely to the injury that Lendl sustained during the closing stages of the second set. A wide forehand, hit rather late, strained his pectoral muscle and removed the sting from his forehand.

However, Svensson was having a golden day and executing to perfection the plan devised with the help of his coach, Tim Klein. They realised that Lendl enjoys rhythm, so Svensson gave him none. Cleverly mixing medium-paced drives with drop shots or sudden darts to the net behind powerful drives, he non-plussed the favourite. The 7-6, 7-5, 6-2 victory was thoroughly earned, as Lendl himself graciously admitted afterwards.

It would be tragic if this injury ends the Czech's chances of achieving his most cherished ambition — to win at Wimbledon. We shall not know for a few days if he will be fit enough to play.

The other young men to excel were the two we noted a fortnight ago, America's Andre Agassi and the talented Argentinian, Guillermo Perez-Roldan. It was curious that the draw should have cast them as opponents in the quarter-finals where Agassi showed the value of the rest he has taken after the Italian Open.

The American's greater power and quicker reactions resulted in a comfortable 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 win to earn a semi-final against the logical new favourite, Wilander, the champion here in 1982 and 1985.

At Middlesex, team spirit transcends county loyalties

the North West Frontier, Peru, Scotland, Australia and Yorkshire, to name but a few.

Ironically, the trend today is towards a non-London enemy and a north London team. There are four Middlesex men in the present squad and three from Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, the neighbouring minor counties and recruitment subrubs.

This Greater London flavour shouldn't be over-rated. No doubt it helps, but ultimately Middlesex's team spirit doesn't come from county or regional loyalty. It is stronger this season than it has been for a long time and as Middlesex continues to surprise everyone by heading the county championship, its team spirit continues to prosper. Simon Hughes, one of the bevy of Middlesex all-rounders, offered a rather enigmatic explanation for his team's well-being. "We started to improve when we asked ourselves a lot of questions last year, after two very bad seasons."

Reluctantly, not wanting to seem obstructive about all this self-examination, I felt nevertheless that I had to ask why it had

FT CROSSWORD No.6,647

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Prizes of £10 each for the first five correct solutions opened. Solutions to be received by Wednesday June 15, marked Crossword 6,647 on the envelope, to the Financial Times, 10 Cannon Street, London EC4P 4BY. Solution on Saturday June 18.

